



INDIA  
AND THE  
ATLANTIC CHARTER

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To  
MY FATHER



The child cries for the toy and the good old nurse has always one ready at hand. The world had been persistently clamouring for the War Aims, but the toy was still in the embryo, till August 15, 1941, when the world was flashed with the news of the dramatic but historic meeting of President Roosevelt and Mr. Winston Churchill, somewhere in the Atlantic.

They presented to all *the peoples* Eight-Point Joint Declaration, embodying the objectives for which the allies are fighting and enunciating the principles as the basis of the future peace of the world. The Anglo-United States Declaration was hailed as a magnificent concept of democratic principles. It was considered to be a Magna Carta of the peoples, bringing to an end the era of exploitation and was to serve the basis of a *peoples charter*, wherein right shall be might and the power of aggression and despotism shall cease to have perpetual

immunity. The United States and Britain solemnly pledged themselves not only to uphold the rights of man—liberty, equality and fraternity—within their own territorial limits but to enforce the same throughout the world. The representatives of both the countries were unequivocally explicit that neither the United States of America, nor Britain seeks territorial or other aggrandisement anywhere in the world, and both will respect the rights of *all peoples* to choose their own form of Government, and to do what they can to give equal access to trade and raw materials to all states, great and small, victor and vanquished.

Mr. C. R. Attlee, the Deputy Prime Minister of the British Government, made the world aghast when he disclosed the well-kept secret of the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting, in a special broadcast over all the B. B. C. stations. Who could visualise that exactly after six months the pregnant words uttered by Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the 15th March, 1941, in the course of a speech broadcast to the world, would be so prophetic as to be the harbinger of the New

## World Order ?

“ We believe that the rallying cry of the Dictators and their boasting about the master race will prove to be pure stuff and nonsense.

“ There has never been and never will be any race of people fit to serve as masters over their fellow-men.

“ The world has no use for any nation, which, because of its size and military might, asserts its right to goosestep to world power over other nations and other races.

“ We believe that any nationality, no matter how small, has the inherent right of its own nationhood. Never in all our history have Americans faced a job so well worthwhile. May it be said of us in the days to come that our children and our children's children will rise up and call us blessed.”

## A Pertinent Question

This epitomises the fundamental provisions of the Atlantic Charter, but the world did not accept it at its face value. Man, as he is constituted by nature, swings between optimism and pessimism. There was a questioning of the political sincerity of America and Britain. To many the Atlantic Charter appeared to be reminiscent of the ill-fated Fourteen Points of



President Woodrow Wilson. Professor Robert M. Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, broadcasting to the peoples of the United States, subjected the Peace Aims embodied in the Roosevelt-Churchill Declaration to a devastating scrutiny. Referring to the demand for the restoration, of the *status quo* in the European countries which have been the victims of aggression, he pertinently asked, "and what do we do about the countries which were victims of aggression before 1939?" "What do we do about Hong-Kong, the Malaya States, the Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, Africa, and above all India?" He poignantly pointed out that the extension of Four Freedoms\* should unhesitatingly be applied to the British Colonies throughout the world, and hopes "held out to India during the last War, disappointed after it, and now held out again, must be fulfilled." The

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\*The reference to Four Freedoms is to President Roosevelt's statement of May 1941, when, during a "Fireside Chat," to the nation, he defined the Four Freedoms as "freedom of speech and expression, freedom of every person to worship his God in his own way, freedom from want, and freedom from terror."

logical sequence is that if America ventures to throw out her lot with the European democracies, she cannot disown responsibility when the war is over, for the fate of the subject races under the sway of these democracies. A more blunt inference would be that if President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill believe in the Eight Points earnestly, the former should insist and the latter should agree to India being treated as the first beneficiary under the provisions of the Atlantic Charter. Senator Reynolds, a champion of Roosevelt's leadership, put it into the face of the world, "Why don't Britain and the United States start imposing the Four Freedoms in India straight-away."

In spite of these pious declarations, the Indian public mind did not find any solace. Indians forewarned by the facts had no business to take the Charter as it was. But a drowning man catches at a straw; and it is scarcely surprising that Indian politicians, and especially those who had been taught from their boyhood to rely upon Britain's good faith and generosity for the attainment

of national freedom, saw in the Atlantic Charter indications of the coming millennium. But there were certain astute statesmen who read something in between the lines. They were once again reminded of what the late Lord Lytton, when Viceroy of India, wrote to the Secretary of State. "I do not hesitate to say," maintained Lord Lytton, "that both the Governments of England and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear." The words seemed to them to be as true to-day as when these were uttered in 1878. They once again urged for a specific and matter of fact statement pledging the British Government to declare India as an independent country soon after the termination of war. They made the frank confession and proclaimed that if the war was to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges, then India could not be a party to the war. If the issue is

democracy, India is, of course, interested in it. If the War Aims of Britain are to fight for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end the free play of imperialistic tendencies in her possessions; establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own Constitution through a Constituent Assembly, without any external interference.

Mr. Winston Churchill, a Tory diehard, who has been throughout his political career opposed to the least recognition of the political rights of Indians, and who vehemently opposed even the reactionary Government of India Act, 1935, could not dare acquiesce Independence to India. He is the still old Churchill of India. On September 9, 1941, Mr. Churchill, made it definitely clear to the House of Commons, that the Joint Declaration did not in any way qualify the various statements made from time to time about the development of Constitutional Government in India. "We have pledged," said the Prime

Minister, "by the declaration of August 1940, to help India to obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject of course to the fulfilment of the obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests."

### A Charter of Serfdom

This interpretation of the Atlantic Charter is diametrically opposed to the broadcast speech of President Roosevelt of March 15. The momentous speech of the American President, which kindled hope and enthusiasm in all nations under alien domination, were dashed by the British Prime Minister. If both the statements are unprejudicially examined, the strangling interpretation of the Atlantic Charter by Mr. Churchill whittles down the great importance and significance of Mr. Roosevelt's declaration. The American President was prepared to recognise the inherent right of every nation to its own nation-

hood, but the great Churchill thought it consistent with his creed, that such right belonged only to the white race. If the Charter is to bring forth emancipation only to the European countries under Nazi aggression, to India it seems that it is a Charter not of freedom but of serfdom.

It is a cardinal rule of interpretation of treaties, agreements and covenants that the words must be read in their natural meaning. Article Three of the Joint Declaration specifically states that "they respect the right of *all peoples* to choose the form of government under which they will live, and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." The Eight Points were presented to the world in the full blaze of publicity. Mr. Attlee, while presenting the Charter to the House of Commons, declared that, "Thursday's (14th August, 1941) declaration will be equally applicable to all races, including Asiatics and Africans." Soon after he made this significant statement, Mr. Attlee again had the opportunity to reiterate his interpreta-

basic ideas of policies that are universal in their application."

## Inconsistent and Hypocritical

But the nebulous foot-note of Mr. Churchill interpreted that the Charter in its application to India was little more than a piece of rhetoric, and as the *News Chronicle* points out: "What the British Government will gladly concede to Yugoslavia, it will withhold from the jewel of the British Empire." The Joint Declaration put in the forefront that America and Britain "seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other"; and yet when the discussion veers round to India, the Prime Minister harks back to the seemingly logical but really inconsistent and even hypocritical plea that Britain cannot renounce "the obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests." Those who had hoped that the war which had made Churchill so dynamic a chief at this crisis would find him equally great in his

handling of the Indian problem were utterly disappointed and disillusioned. Professor Harold J. Laski, in his dispassionate study of Mr. Churchill, rightly says that he is the greatest War Minister after Chatham. But "he has not yet shown that he is a great Prime Minister, still less that he is the right man for the place. His inherent tendency is to be unsympathetic to a point of view he does not share. He is far too prone to make acceptance of his own views for an understanding of the issue." No man except a diehard imperialist could explain away the Atlantic Charter in its relation to India in the manner in which Mr. Churchill has done. He has not changed by a jot or little his implacable opposition to real self-government to India. The Atlantic Charter recognised the right of every nation, European or non-European, to live its own life and manage its own affairs, unhampered by the enforced trusteeship of outsiders, but the Prime Minister, by distorting facts, violating the solemn promises made, and in contravention of the international rules of interpretation of treaties, introduces



reservations and qualifications, making the world believe that the Charter is nothing but, according to the *News Chronicle* of London, an English daily by no means a radical paper, a "symbol of hypocrisy." It may seem a little unconventional, but it is nonetheless a fact that not many in England and America—let alone India—regarded the Atlantic Charter as more than a spectacular piece of propaganda. The specific exclusion of India from the Charter was a needless but a deliberate affront to the Indian nation. Early in October Dr. Haden Guest, in the course of a Parliamentary debate, said: "I wish that one day the Premier would send a message to the people of China and India and Africa that, in the world in which we envisage, a democratic world for which we are fighting, there will be equality of political and economic circumstances for these races and not only for the white people and the people of Europe."

But Dr. Haden Guest could not conceive, when making the above statement, of what stuff the Prime Minister is made of. The preamble to the Atlantic Charter

states that Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt "deem it right to make it known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world." Does India not constitute a component factor of the world? Its answer in the Churchillian sense of the term is No with a capital N. Among the "common principles" the one stated in Article Three of the Charter is that: "they (the President and the British Prime Minister) respect the right of *all peoples* to choose the form of government under which they will live." The legal brains of the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference tell us that it is "difficult to believe that it could have been the intention of President Roosevelt to exclude India from the operations of the First Part (of the third principle laid down in the Atlantic Charter), or Mr. Churchill could have ignored at that time India's claim to self-government." This is what Mr. Attlee tells us when he says that "Thursday's declaration will be equally

applicable to all races, including Asiatics and Africans." This is exactly what Mr. Cordell Hull meant by "the statement of basic ideas of policies that are universal in their application." Even President Roosevelt, one of the signatories to the Charter, made it public at the Press Conference he held on board the "Potomac," before landing, "that not a single section of a single continent went undiscussed at the Conference at sea."

### Churchill's Imperial Duty

But Mr. Churchill's candour and boldness, that "thou shall speak nothing but the truth," makes us believe that at the Atlantic meeting the President and the Prime Minister "had in mind primarily the extension of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the states and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke and the principles which would govern any alterations in territorial boundaries of countries which may have to be made." It is a sense of imperative and

imperial duty which compelled Mr. Churchill to exclude India from a "single section of the single continent," and Indian people outside 'all peoples' of the world, and *ipso facto* to declare that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India and other dependencies in the British Empire. Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, while addressing a meeting of the United Provinces Liberal Association, voiced the feelings of the whole of India when he said, "It was clear that the British authorities had not changed their attitude. We must make it clear that we cannot allow ourselves to be used as tools of imperialism. We cannot, while helping other nations in attaining their freedom, be oblivious of our duty to enable our own country to achieve freedom."

In a Penguin Special, *Where Do We Go From Here*, Professor Harold J. Laski, writes that the character of the British rule in India has been "maintained in defiance of Indian demand," and it had "long stained our reputation for plain dealing all over the world; until the advent of Hitler and Mussolini, it was the classic example

of imperialist exploitation." It is this 'imperialist exploitation' of Mr. Churchill which makes him shudder at the name of self-government in India. Hardly a decade ago, the same Mr. Winston Churchill emphatically said that "the British nation has no intention whatever of relinquishing control of Indian life and progress. We have 'no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel in the Crown of the King, which more than all our dominions and dependencies constitutes the glory and strength of the British Empire." Here is Mr. Churchill, the friend of India, who is not only true to his words but in his deeds as well. If he were to concede the right of self-determination to India, it would not merely render the British Empire the poorer for it, but it would also be disastrous to the teeming millions of this country. In April, 1932, Mr. Churchill triumphantly declared that "it would be monstrous if we were to hand over these three hundred millions of human beings to be exploited and harried by small, bitter and unrepresentative

groups, gangs and cliques. . . . It may well be that the departure of Great Britain from India would be followed by something very like the dark ages. I believe that the interests of the Indian proletariat and the interests of Great Britain are in absolute harmony." This is the reflex of Mr. Churchill's attitude towards India and her future. Therefore, they were not the very suspicious who looked for snags and mantraps in his September statement. It is really Mr. Churchill and his Government who have despaired even the most ardent loyalists and co-operators. Co-operation and non co-operation have both been treated alike. "The sweet reasonableness of a Tej Bahadur Sapru, the earnest plea of a Gandhi for justice, the threat of dire consequences by the Indian revolutionary all met with the same fate."

### Widespread Discontentment

The interpretation of the Atlantic Charter failed, however, to evoke the grateful appreciation that was perhaps



that the Prime Minister's statement of September 9 with reference to the Atlantic Charter expressly made it clear that the Government's previous declaration with regard to the goal of India's attainment of free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth and with regard to our desire to see the goal attained with the least possible delay after the war under a constitution framed by agreement among the Indians themselves, held good and is in no way qualified." Mr. Amery's reply was a masterpiece of evasion, and though others failed to perceive how the dotting of the i's and crossing of the t's made any improvement in the September statement of Mr. Churchill; yet Sir Sikander was very oblingingly agreed to be satisfied. We cannot vouch what made Sir Sikander satisfied. Perhaps, discretion is the better part of valour.

Sixteen months after he became Prime Minister of England, Mr. Churchill broke his studied silence on the Indian constitutional problem. The Atlantic Charter, couched in the terms it was, had raised



hopes that the principles enunciated in it would be applied to all races, irrespective of the fact whether they were groaning under Nazi tyranny or British domination. To that hope Mr. Churchill gave the final quietus in his speech of September 9.

### A First Rate Constitutional Issue

But there can be no question that Mr. Churchill's interpretation of the declaration is a flat contradiction of the meaning placed on it by his Deputy, Mr. Attlee. The reconciliation of Mr. Cordell Hull's interpretation of the Atlantic Charter with Mr. Churchill's statement is for the two Governments to settle. But the conflicting meanings attached to the Atlantic Charter by the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, both before the House of Commons and the West African Students Union, and that of Mr. Churchill barring India, and British dependencies, from the ambit of its operation, creates a first rate constitutional issue. The Parliamentary form of Government in England subsists

on the much-vaunted principle of Collective responsibility of the Cabinet. It is a convention of the constitution that on major issues of policy of fundamental importance, like the scope and applicability of the Atlantic Charter, there should be complete unanimity between the members of the Government, "and two members of the Cabinet should not speak with two voices." Yet in the interpretation of the Atlantic Charter, both the Prime Minister and the Acting Prime Minister have not only spoken with two voices, "but with voices which are mutually exclusive." There could not be two statements more opposed to one another than the statement of the Prime Minister and his Deputy. The natural and constitutional result of this disharmony would have been that either Mr. Attlee would have resigned from Mr. Churchill's Cabinet, or he would have been forced to resign by Mr. Churchill for committing the British Government to a line of policy which was contrary to the intentions of the Prime Minister. If on a trivial matter Mr.

Montagu could be forced to resign, it is surprising that such an important divergence of opinion did not shock the constitutionalism of Mr. Churchill.

There is another question which we seriously put to the ingenuity of Mr. Churchill. It is Mr. Attlee who, in his acting capacity of the Prime Minister, during the absence of Mr. Churchill, was responsible for the initiation of the policy to be pursued and for all the acts of omission and commission. The British Prime Minister is the child of chance. The law of the land does not prescribe his specific duties and his constitutional position on his absence from the country, whether on State business or otherwise. Therefore, by the simple process of ordinary custom, which is ordinarily observed in every walk of life, and of which even the law takes cognisance, it is the acting head who is held responsible for all acts of omission and commission. It was the pronouncement and committal of Mr. Attlee which would have been the authenticated interpretation of the Atlantic Charter and not

that of the self-assertive Mr. Churchill. If Mr. Attlee did not think it worthwhile to take serious exception to the vetoing attitude taken by Mr. Churchill, does it in any way exonerate Mr. Churchill from his unconstitutional, arbitrary and dictatorial usurpation of the virtual rights of the acting head of the Government?

### Wrongs of White Races

Mr. Attlee, during the course of his speech before the West African Students, said: "We the Labour Party have always been conscious of the wrongs done by the white races to the races with darker skins. We have been glad to see how, with the passing of the years, the old conception of the colonies as places inhabited by inferior people, whose function was only to serve and produce wealth for the benefit of other people has made way for juster and nobler ideas." Herein the Acting Prime Minister not only made bare the creed and programme of the Labour Party, but he considered the Atlantic Charter to be the

conclusive proof of this change. But Mr. Churchill categorically disowns the belief and sentiments of Mr. Attlee and outright vetoes his interpretation. The Bombay Correspondent of *The Tribune*, reported in the issue of the paper dated November 23, 1941, that, according to private advices received from London, it appeared that "Mr. Attlee put up a strong fight in the British Cabinet for the acceptance of his views to the effect that the Atlantic Charter should be applied to India." It is further reported that the Labour and the Liberal and certain Conservative Members of Parliament supported Mr. Attlee's proposition. But "the Labour and Liberal parties, however, did not like to press their views to the breaking point on this issue." The Conservative opposition, led by Mr. Amery, therefore, prevailed. We do not know what transpired in the meeting of the Cabinet; but one fact is patent: that we have no taste left for mere sympathy and promises. Promises translated into actions are the only convincing proof of sincerity.

If Mr. Attlee still sticks to the statement of policy made by him, there is only one honourable course open to him, and to this course the Deputy Prime Minister is constitutionally, politically, and morally bound. The Tory Party, evidently, is not fighting this war for the same purposes as the Labour Party. But if the *raison d'être* of the Labour Party is to fight aggression and foreign domination, as professed and publicly declared by Mr. Attlee, then the Labour Party, under the leadership of Mr. Attlee, should rally all their forces and appeal to the electorate. Otherwise, the defenders of democracy cannot persuade the people of Germany that the British are fighting to free Europe, unless they set out at once to free India. "They will believe" writes Sir Richard Acland "we are fighting to preserve our colonial possessions and theirs unless we set out at once to transfer these possessions to the only people who have any right to them. They will believe we are fighting to hold them in military subjection unless we set out at once to create a system in which no one can hold

any one in military subjection." But the truth of the matter is that British Labour in Office has so often shown that it is ready to pocket its principles in the interests of British imperialism, and eventually it will be needless to expect, either Mr. Attlee or other Labour members of the British Cabinet, to take a firm stand for the policy in which they profess to have a firm faith. Some times they can take shelter behind economic crisis to shelve their principles; at others it may be the expediency of war. Whatever it is, so far as India is concerned, the same old rut must continue, whether it may be the Labour, the Liberals or the Conservatives who are in power.

### Not Binding on Parliament

Another very important constitutional issue, which may puzzle the constitutionalism of certain British statesmen, has been raised by Mr. John Haynes Holmes, Editor of the *Unity of Chicago*. In the course of his observations on the Atlantic Charter,

Mr. John Haynes Holmes says, "just where Roosevelt and Churchill got the power thus to commit their governments without any authorization of or even consultation with Congress and Parliament, is an interesting but wholly academic question."

It may be an academic point according to Mr. Holmes, but so far as Great Britain and India are concerned, it is a point of immense constitutional importance.. For, in the British Empire, Parliament is the final authority, and any promise made or pledge given by the Prime Minister, or any of the ministers, is not binding on the Parliament. In support of our statement, we refer to the passage from the *Labour's Way with the Commonwealth*, by Mr. George Lansbury, M. P., and edited by Major C. R. Attlee, now the Deputy Premier:

Lord Rankeillour, who was for many years Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons, and so may be assumed to speak with authority, said that we were bound by the preamble to the Govern-



ment of India Act 1919, but by nothing else. And speaking of these pledges he added these words: 'no statement by a Viceroy, no statement by any representative of the sovereign, no statement by the Prime Minister, indeed, no statement by the sovereign himself, can bind Parliament against its judgment.' (Hansard, House of Lords, December 13, 1934, Vol. 95, No. 8, Col. 3317) pp. 76-77.

Even if Mr. Churchill had declared that the Atlantic Charter applied to India, his declaration would not by itself have been binding on Parliament, in the absence of its specific authorisation by the latter. Mr. Churchill signified his adherence to it jointly with Mr. Roosevelt, without consulting the British Parliament, the final authority in the British Empire. The Parliament can constitutionally refuse to ratify it. It is Mr. Churchill's declaration and not that of the Parliament and, therefore, it is not a Parliamentary pledge. The Parliament has the inherent right, according to the Preamble to the Government of India Act, to either ratify or repudiate any constitutional change sought to be wrought.

If we are to place any reliance upon the report of *The Tribune* Correspondent (dated November 23) that "the battle for the application of the Atlantic Charter to India is not yet over in Britain and it is said some of the acutest thinkers in Great Britain are not satisfied with the position, taken up by Mr. Churchill"; would it be too much for the Members of Parliament to move a resolution in Parliament and to have its verdict on the issue? We know the trammels of the party system in the parliamentary life of a country, and the party whip plays an important part in the determination of votes. There is every possibility, if Mr. Churchill does not press for the confidence of the House, but every member is left free to vote according to his conscience and sentiments, that such a resolution may receive the ready approval of Parliament. There are members in the House of Commons, like Mr. MacGovern, who, in spite of the crisis in which England is presently engulfed, consider the Prime Minister "both a self-confessed advocate of aggression and a defender of

Fascist aggression". In the estimation of Mr. MacGovern, "the Atlantic Charter was one of the grossest pieces of deceit in modern times", because the British Prime Minister is prepared to apply it to the countries overrun by Hitler, "while the independent Government which it proposes to give them is denied to territories that have been overrun in the past by Britain herself." We take it for granted that any Cabinet crisis at this perilous juncture in England is undoubtedly least desired by any sane person, whether English or Indian. But it does not rule out of question a simple constitutional process which may solve the political idiosyncrasy of Mr. Churchill.

### Churchill's prejudices against India

Mr. Churchill, true to his political creed, shall, under no circumstances, allow such a resolution to be moved in Parliament. At this critical hour of the English nation he is the deciding factor of the destiny of the British Empire. He is confi-

dent that his leadership at this hour is indispensable to England. Then why not make a virtue of necessity and have his life's dream materialised? Mr. MacGovern, while moving his amendment in reply to the King's Speech in the House of Commons, on November 27, declared "that the Prime Minister was a self-confessed opponent even of Dominion Status for those colonial territories which were occupied by Britain." Out of all these colonial territories, India, to Mr. Churchill, is the most precious jewel, and in December, 1930, the Prime Minister said: "Most of the leading public men—of whom I was one in those days—made speeches—I certainly did—about Dominion Status, but I did not contemplate India having the same constitutional rights and system as Canada in any period which we can foresee . . . . England apart from her Empire in India, ceases for ever to exist as a great power." While giving evidence before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament—1933-34, "No member of the Cabinet," said Mr. Winston Churchill, "meant, contemplated

or wished to suggest the establishment of a Dominion Constitution for India for any period which human beings ought to take into account." Mr. Churchill has given no indications that his views on this subject have changed since then. He professes the same views and Mr. MacGovern, as proved from the real facts, was perfectly right when he said that "the Prime Minister's mind is more akin to Fascists than any Fascist and it has been transformed to-day into lip service for freedom while the whole position is really commercial and imperial." Did not the same Mr. Churchill say, not very long ago, that "the British nation had no intention whatever of relinquishing control of Indian life and progress" and talked of the political expediency of "sooner or later to crush Gandhi and Congress all they stand for"? To expect a politician, however, clever and eminent, who entertains such violent prejudices against the Indian people, the country and her leaders, to be the emancipator of India, is to expect roses to grow on a bush of thistles. Mr. Churchill

may be admitted to his credit, said, the course of his September statement that "it is a wise rule that when parties have agreed on a statement they shall not thereafter, without consultation with the other, proceed to special or strained interpretations of this or that sentence. I propose, then, to speak only in an exclusive sense." This is tantamount to say that the interpretation of the Atlantic Charter given by Mr. Churchill is his own handiwork though he ought to have spoken in consultation with the other signatory, and does so exclusively. What a contradiction of terms! Mr. Churchill not only gives a new interpretation to the provisions of the Charter, but his statement is self-contradictory and inconsistent. He says at the "Atlantic meeting, we had in mind the extension of the sovereignty of the government and national life of the peoples and nations of Europe now under the Nazi yoke." The word "primarily" does not mean exclusively. The European peoples under the Nazi tyranny may have

uppermost in the minds of both Roosevelt and Churchill. But did they exclude from their consideration all the other subject peoples of the world? We find its answer in the broadcast speech of Mr. Churchill himself, soon after his return from the Atlantic voyage. Mr. Churchill, in his first flush of enthusiasm, declared (August 24, 1941): "We had the idea when we met there—the President and I—that without attempting to draw final formal peace aims and war aims it was necessary to give *all peoples*, and especially the oppressed and conquered peoples a simple rough and ready war-time statement of the goal towards which the British Commonwealth and the United States mean to make their way and thus make a way for others to march with them upon a road which will certainly be painful and may be long."

It is regrettable that Mr. Churchill found it necessary to retract from his own words. The Standing Committee of the Non Party Conference could not believe that President Roosevelt did mean to exclude Indians from the benefits of the

Charter. The President in his "Thanksgiving Day Proclamation," released to the Press by the American Consul in Madras on November 26, said: "We have not lost our faith in the spiritual dignity of man, our proud belief in the right of *all people to live out their lives in freedom and with equal treatment*. The love of democracy still burns brightly in our hearts." Mr. Roosevelt again explicitly used the words "the right of *all people* to live their lives in freedom and with equal treatment." The Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference, and all those who have always admired "the love of democracy" which "still burns brightly" the hearts of the Americans, could not infer otherwise than the natural meanings and interpretation which they placed on the Atlantic Charter.

### Roosevelt's Reticence

But the calamity is that the President does not distinctly say what he wants to say, and he cannot be persuaded to disclose his intentions directly to the people of a



The Atlantic Charter was put before the Second Inter-allied Conference for confirmation on September 24, 1941, at London. The Conference was presided over by Mr. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary. It was attended by delegates from Russia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Free France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, Norway, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Although Mr. Amery was present at the Conference, yet it is not stated whether he was representing India, or was there in his personal capacity. The fact that Mr. Amery was present, more as a mere spectator, will be obvious by the omission of any reference to India in the opening speech of Mr. Eden. Explaining the preamble to the resolution of the opening day, Mr. Eden remarked that the "Resolution made no mention of His Majesty's Government or the Governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, because these Governments were already associated with the declaration." It had been the practice of the

British Government, in similar cases in the past, to mention India, along with the Dominions. She had been made the original member of the League of Nations and had been separately represented at Inter-Imperial and International Conferences. The omission of a reference to India at this Conference was premeditated and deliberate. The Foreign Secretary asked Mr. MacGovern, in reply to the amendment moved by the latter to the King's speech, "why did he not tell us of the five or six, or whatever the number may be, Indian divisions of all volunteers who have been fighting with such magnificent gallantry in the last few weeks." Mr. Eden proudly added that Hitler "cannot raise a single platoon among them, and he never will (cheers) because his rule is tyranny." The tributes paid to our soldiers on their heroic deeds synchronised with loud cheers from all sections of the House. But the magnificent courage and bravery of the Indian troops equally demands from the British Government, a generous response that the termination of the War will usher in India an era

of self-government, which will place them on a footing of perfect equality with Britain herself and the Dominions. If they are given such an assurance it "will enable them to fight the War, if possible, with even greater courage, vigour and earnestness than they have exhibited so far, and make millions of their countrymen emulate their example." But the exclusion of India from the operations of the Atlantic Charter is the avowed policy of the Churchill Government. They intend to keep India to the wheels of British imperialism indefinitely. They will not commit themselves definitely, as they would have done, either in the interpretation of the Atlantic Charter by Mr. Churchill, or by the inclusion of India into the Government which "were already associated with the declaration" of the Atlantic Charter described by Mr. Eden in the Inter-allied Conference. They will rest satisfied with the lip service to freedom.

## **Maisky Supports Attlee**

But the most striking feature of the Conference is the speech made by M. Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador. He took the same view of the Atlantic Charter as did Mr. Attlee. While proclaiming his acceptance of the Atlantic Charter, he said that "the Soviet Union defended the right of every nation to independence and territorial integrity and its right to choose its own social form and to choose such form of Government as was deemed opportune and necessary for a better promotion of its own economic prosperity." The Soviet Ambassador went a little further. He spoke in the same words in which did Mr. Roosevelt on March 15, 1941. "The Soviet Union," added M. Maisky, "had consistently condemned all violation of sovereign rights of peoples by aggression and aggressors and any attempts of aggressive states to impose their will upon other peoples." Similar was the burden of speech of the representatives from other countries. M. Masaryk, who represented the Czecho-

Slovak Government, expressed the same view in equally explicit terms. The Eight Points in the Atlantic Charter, according to M. Masaryk, were "the corner-stone in the process of achieving a better world for our children after final victory," and it is "only after the destruction of Hitlerism, could we establish such a peace that *all men in all lands* would live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

Such were the high aspirations embodied in the Atlantic Charter and at the meeting a resolution was adopted declaring their "adherence to the common principles of the policy set forth in the Charter and their intention to co-operate to the best of their ability in giving effect to them." Could we imagine that while passing this resolution the representatives of the Inter-allied Conference, including M. Maisky, were oblivious of the non-applicability of the Atlantic Charter to India? Yes! All of them knew it like the day-light that Mr. Churchill had denied its application to the Indians. If so, did they consider if it is wrong for Germany to impose her will on

the people of the European vanquished countries, why should it be a virtue for Britain to impose her will on the people of India? But the Conference was in no mood to tackle this point. In the present War India's sympathy had unreservedly gone for Russia, which M. Maisky said "was not fishing for herself alone but for the security and freedom of other nations." But when Soviet Russia extends her unflinching support to the text of the Charter, which does not recognise the right of four hundred million people of a vast sub-continent to their independence, to choose their own social form or have their own government, Russia belies her own ideals and sentiments. Shall we be far wrong if we say that the entire human race consists broadly of the white and the coloured peoples and if the latter aspire for freedom, they would have to achieve it by their own blood and sweat, without any help from their white brethren, whether English or Russians?

We have critically analysed the farce of the Atlantic Charter which received wholesale condemnation in the country

nation of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy bodes disasters to Indian hopes." Since one proposes and the other submissively acquiesces, the policy pursued by this 'trio', however, genuine according to their reason and sense of honour, has been looked at with askance even by those who have either to run the administrative machinery of the country, or to devise plans for her defences. The Honourable Malik Khuda Bux, Speaker of the Frontier Legislative Assembly, and a member of the National Defence Council, stigmatises the British policy towards India as "wooden, barren and antediluvian". In spite of the incalculable sacrifices of Indians, both by way of men and money, the British statesmen "have undergone no change of heart." They are not prepared to define a definite and unequivocal policy towards India.

Mr. Churchill to this part of the accusation has amply replied in his statement of September 9. "We have pledged," said the Prime Minister, "by the declaration of August, 1940, to help India to-

obtain free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth with ourselves, subject of course to the fulfilment of the obligations arising from our long connection with India and our responsibilities to its many creeds, races and interests." The August, 1940, statement of Mr. Amery tends to concede the popular demand of Dominion Status and the Secretary of State for India declared that " His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with that desire and wish to see it give the fullest practical expression subject to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed on her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility." It is subject to these qualifications that India becomes entitled to " free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth." But apart from the so-called " obligations," there are certain other " responsibilities," the onus of which falls upon Great Britain, and, therefore, " His Majesty's Government have made it definitely clear that they



cannot contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government, whose authority is denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life."

What do these "obligations" and "responsibilities" mean? The so-called historic obligations of Britain mean pre-eminently her "obligations" to the Indian Princes, and the British vested interests, political and economic, as well as in the matter of defence. Her responsibilities to the "various creeds, races and interests" ostensibly mean her responsibilities to the minority communities, and more especially to the Muslim minority. Mr. Amery is committed to his August statement when he said that the task of devising a constitution is entrusted to a "body representative of the principle elements in India's national life", but this representative body does not mean a "body on lines which may command themselves to one particular element, however, influential but may be regarded as wholly unaccept-

able to the minority elements."

### **Anxious to Preserve Paramountcy**

This in plain words means that in the first place Britain is anxious to preserve her paramountcy over Indian States, a complete control over India's defence, and to safeguard the British vested interests, including the British Services. It were these obligations which haunted the authors of the Government of India Act, 1935, and they still adhere to them most doggedly. Mr. Amery, in His Manchester Speech of November 23, has very lucidly explained these historic obligations of Great Britain. With regard to Defence Mr. Amery says, "so long as the defence of India requires the permanent presence as—distinguished from help in a great emergency—of British forces, it is obvious that a Government which provides those forces is entitled to retain a measure of control on their employment in peace, as well as, on the external policy which may call for their employment in war."

Every student of Indian Economics is well aware of the fact, that firstly, more than 50 per cent. of the total revenue of the country is spent on the military; and, secondly, that the total strength of the army in India, during the normal times, is far in excess than it is necessary. This heavy drain on the Indian resources for years out of number has tended to Starve other beneficent departments. Again, the large portion of the army in normal times has always been stationed on the North-West Frontier of India. The protection of the Frontier has been admitted to be an Imperial question, and logically speaking, the cost of the defence of the Frontier should fall on the British Exchequer. If Britain preserves to herself the right to mould the external policy of India, on whatever consideration, even after the grant of Dominion Status, it will virtually be a status of subjection and not of sovereignty.

Though Mr. Amery does not give the "exhaustive list" of these obligations, yet

he specifically mentions, in his Manchester speech referred-to above, "the actual contractual obligations to the existing members of the services," and the obligations of "the Crown towards Indian States." What is this responsibility? Was it not admitted by Sir Samuel Hoare, a former Secretary of State for India, publicly, when he said that "one principle object of the British Government in trying to bring the Indian States into the orbit of India's federal constitution was to temper democracy with autocracy or absolutism"? And so long as the Crown retains this obligation in India, democracy shall continue to be tampered with absolutism.

The second proviso is that there should be "substantial agreement by the main elements on the main principles." But what are these main elements? Mr. Amery states these are in the first place, "the political units into which India is divided," and "secondly the great religious and cultural communities of India above all two main ones, Hindu and Muslim."

It comes to this that in framing the future constitution of India there must be complete accord between the eleven provinces in which the country is already divided; the Indian States "equally excluded from the control of India's general, foreign, defence and economic policy but with no precise demarcation between their powers, and those of the Crown"; and the "great religious and cultural communities of India". The Muslims, represented by Mr. Jinnah, are pledged to the Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League, which pertains to the acceptance of *Pakistan* or vivisection of the country. Mr. Jinnah is not prepared to accept any other constitution except on the basis of the division of India into two separate and independent states. This will mean that while Mr. Jinnah does not agree to the constitution proposed by the *majority party* or the majority community does not concede to what Mr. Jinnah wants, there cannot be any possibility of India's right to self-determination, and she must, therefore, continue her life of subservience

indefinitely.

Mr. Jamna Das Mehta quite cogently said that "the declaration of August, 1940, is not a declaration of freedom but of bondage. It was a declaration to perpetuate the vested interests and the British gold over this "dear possession" giving the minorities the power to veto its progress." Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, while speaking of these "obligations" and "responsibilities" individually and collectively said, that "in themselves they may seem to be innocuous, but in their application they are susceptible to a great deal of mischief." Mr. Jinnah, in his speech before his Party's walk-out from the Central Assembly, on October 28, 1941, said that "when the announcement of August 8, 1940, came the spirit and even the letter of it was almost exactly what the Muslim League had urged. The League welcomed it....."

One cannot but agree that "will, not force is the basis of the state" and, therefore, any constitution to be devised for India must be the result of agreement

between different communities, but not the basis of agreement as is sought to be imposed by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery. What the British Government desires is an agreement in which the constitutional and communal questions are not only mixed up, but which give precedence to forces of reaction in the country. Modern democratic constitutions, with perhaps the solè exception of Great Britain, have been drawn up by the elected representatives of the people in accordance with the decision of the *majority*. In all the western countries with a Parliamentary form of Government, there are *politico-economic* parties, which constitute the majorities and the minorities in the country. But in India we find there is both a horizontal and vertical division of our parties.

### Congress a National Body

The British imperialists have adopted and will adopt all the sinister dodges which they can think of to divide the political complexion of the country into water-

tight compartments. Whenever they talk of a *majority party* in India, they do not mean the Congress, a representative political party in the country, but the Hindu community, which for all intents and purposes, is believed to be the majority party. The British Government particularly tends to take Congress to be synonymous with the Hindu community. Mr. Amery, in his August 1940, speech says, "there is also a group of scheduled castes, who feel that as a community, they stand outside the main *Hindu body which is representative of the Congress.*" The Congress has never claimed to be a representative Hindu body. It is a national body with a national outlook and which commands within its ranks members of every community, though the Hindus constitute the major portion. The British have always ignored its representative existence and have tried to label it as a communal body. The result is that in India the majority is not only denied its inherent right, but their decisions are to be outright vetoed by the verdict of a minority community obtained by dubious or clandestine



method. To make a democratic country contingent upon an agreement amongst the leaders of different communities, who have hitherto failed to reconcile their differences, is neither self-government, nor democracy but the very negation of both. Britain has reserved to herself the right to decide whom she should regard as India's leaders, "has taken special care to load with special privileges many of those who have marked anti-national proclivities, armed with in advance with the right of vetoing the decision of the majority and then called upon, most innocently, the so-called leaders of all communities to come to an agreement among themselves." One cannot help saying that Britain's assumed obligations and assumed responsibilities in India, are only at par with Germany's assumed responsibilities for a new world order or Japan's professed responsibilities for the salvation of the races inhabiting the Pacific.

If long association with a subject country can give its rulers, the right to historic obligations and responsibilities, it must also make them share the blame for any

lack of development in that country. It should not, therefore, be an argument to deprive a nation of its nationhood, and indeed, England did not press these obligations and responsibilities in the Anglo-Irish treaty. "We announce", writes Professor Laski, "that we shall put no obstacle in the way of Indian freedom ; we only ask that all Indians of every sort shall first agree upon its pattern. And since that agreement is not forthcoming, we continue to govern India for our own purposes." What we insist is the right of the *majority*, and it is in the same sense, in which Britain herself stands for it. As a matter of fact the dogma of majority rights is the prelude to a democratic form of Government. But to deny the same right to the majority party in India, is in the words of Mr. Srinivas Sastri, a charter of intransigence to minorities, or more logically, according to Mr. Amery to one single minority. And here it is necessary to remove a misapprehension under which the British Government has ever been labouring. When we ask Britain to concede to the just demand of India, we

do not absolutely mean to frustrate the rights of the minority communities and give a latitude to the majority community to ride rough shod over the minorities. The Congress has never wanted that. The 1929 Congress Resolution explicitly and emphatically says that no solution of the communal problem would be acceptable to the Congress "unless it was endorsed by the minorities themselves."

The question of minorities is not only peculiar to India, and it should not be insurmountable for our constitutional genius. In countries like Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, and various other European countries, the racial and cultural diversity is much more pronounced than what it is in India. It is not conspicuous by its absence in England itself. Can we put a question to the English statesmen, what they have done to the minorities in their own country? Are there no Jews, Scotchmen, Catholics, Anglicans, Gauls, etc. in Great Britain? If there are, have they any right of representation on communal lines, as it is desired, to be perpetuated in

India? Let us put the same problem in another way. If Britain—God forbid—were under a foreign domination, and if that foreign power after having given separate electorates to Jews, Catholics, Anglicans, Englishmen, Scotchmen and Gauls, ask them to arrive at an agreement among themselves, as to what the British Constitution should be; we have not the least doubt that the benign foreign rulers would be laughing in their sleeves, while the representatives of one or more British nations discussed, quarrelled and came to blows with one another. Since there would not be any unanimity amongst these diversified elements, the suzerain power may come and say, "Well! gentlemen, unless you do not agree you have no right to self-determination, since we do not want that the rights of the minorities should be ruthlessly frustrated."

### Genesis of Communal Trouble

When the nation is so deliberately divided into water-tight compartments and this

division includes regional, racial, communal, vertical, horizontal and all other possible and impossible groups, it destroys the very basis of the unity of a nation. The present communal trouble in India "really originated in 1905 when Lord Minto persuaded a number of Muslim Zamindars and other subservient sections of the Muslim community to wait on him in deputation under the Leadership of His Highness the Agha Khan to put forward a demand for separate rights and privileges for Musalmans." Lord Minto was alive to the political awakening of India in the beginning of the present century. He was anxious to keep Indians the slaves of British Imperialism. Lord Minto found the solution of the problem in the maxim of *Divide et empara*, propounded by Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, in 1859, and committed himself to the communal representation in the legislatures and the local bodies. "The process of separatism thus started" culminated in the demand of the Muslim League for the partition of India in the Lahore Resolution of 1940. Mr. Jinnah

himself is our authority for the statement that the *Pakistan* demand, which the British Government themselves consider inadmissible, is the offspring of separate electorates. Not long ago, it was revealed in the Press, that the *Pakistan* scheme which pertains to the vivisection of the country into two parts, is not the child of Mr. Jinnah. It was first initiated by a group of Englishmen. The movement was started in London between the Second and Third Round Table Conferences "when Mr. Churchill, Sir Claude Jacob and Sir Michel Odwyer, diehards of the Conservative Party, were building up a strong opposition, both inside and outside Parliament to the National Government's Indian policy." It may be recalled that recently Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, addressing the Muslim Students Federation Conference, at Lyallpur, warned his audience against the movement which was essentially foreign in origin, though he refrained from disclosing the details.

Mr. Jinnah adopted it as a handy weapon against the Congress. Once the

ball was set rolling by the ingenuity of English politicians, and considered as the true panacea for the political ills of the country by the Muslim League, the British Government tried to foster it. "But as long as every vested interest in India is," writes Mr. H. J. Laski, "like the Moslem interest, encouraged, openly or secretly, to believe that it will get better terms for dependence upon us than from a real attempt at accommodation with other Indian interests, of course agreement between them is not forthcoming." This political friction was considered a virtue in disguise by the British diplomacy, and according to Mr. Laski, "we patronise these dissidents from unity in the same way, though much more subtly, as the Conservative party has so long patronised the separation of Ulster; and with the same evil consequences."

Mr. Amery tells us that the August Declaration is higher in its ideals and aspirations than the Atlantic Charter. We for ourselves cannot take the Atlantic Charter at Par with the August declaration

of Mr. Amery. If it is true what Mr. Amery says, then according to Mr. S. Satyamurti, "why not promise the smaller to us, while you have promised the higher to us?" It is maintained that Mr. Amery's famous declaration—"India's new constitution should be devised not by the British Parliament but by the Indians themselves"—is identical to Article Three of the Atlantic Charter—"they respect the right of all the peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live." Mr. Amery in his Manchester speech said that "the answer we did give in August last year was no less far-reaching in its scope and far more definite in the procedure envisaged and in the pledge involved. It defined as our proclaimed and accepted goal that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which is usually referred to as Dominion Status." The Secretary of State for India further pointed out that "it went on in the very spirit of the Atlantic Charter to make it clear that we wished India to enjoy that position under a constitution framed



primarily by Indians in accordance with Indian conceptions." But the truth is just the reverse. The Atlantic Charter is in its essentials, unconditional and unequivocal, whereas the August statement, as has been shown, is fettered by two conditions, which both individually and collectively, reduce it to a nullity. Indians are not to frame their constitution freely and unreservedly as '*all peoples*', per Article Three of the Atlantic Charter, "to choose the form of Government under which they will live" but subject to certain "obligations" and "responsibilities". All this is tantamount to "hot ice" in the words of Sir. N. N. Sarkar, until recently the member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Since Britain herself is the judge of all these obligations and responsibilities, and unless the British policy does not undergo a radical change, and undo the political wrongs done to our country, complete self-government cannot be envisaged in India within a reasonable period of time.

There is so much doubt on the political

sincerity of the British Government, and it is belived by the popular mind in India, that even if the Congress and the Muslim League were to agree among themselves, the British would ever consider it worthwhile to part with power over India. Perhaps Mr. MacGovern rightly felt the pulse of the Indian Public opinion when he said that "the Indian political parties were not going to be given Dominion Status or responsible Government for all India in any period which it was worthwhile considering at the time." The phrase Britain's "obligations and responsibilities" has one simple meaning: the unwillingness of the British to part with their power. They will have to recognise that an equitable and lasting settlement, as envisaged in the Atlantic Charter, means and presupposes that Britain should rather give the right of self-determination a universal scope in India than press her rights and privileges. India is interested in the triumph of order over chaos and of liberty over enslavement, and this is one of the fundamental reasons of India's whole hearted sympathy with

Britain, Russia and all other countries, who are out to destroy Hitlerism. "But if Britain," emphatically stressed Sir Radhakrishnan, in his Convocation address to the Agra University, "has not been able to mobilise, not the material resources but the moral forces, it is because she is unwilling, even in this critical hour, to apply the principles of democracy to India." While India does not want to share the lot of the countries overrun by Hitler, there is an overwhelming majority of her people who consider, in the words of Sir Sarvapalli, "that the war is an Imperialist war for the defence of this straggling ramshackle system of domination, finance, trade and tradition : the British Empire."

### Our Demand

India wants peace and happiness in the world and this is incompatible with the narrow mindedness of the so-called Master races. India knows from her past experience what political and economic slavery means and it is for this reason that our sympathy and full support goes to those countries who

have succumbed to the tyranny of Hitler. But "why should India be branded as guilty of treason if she re-echoes Roosevelt's historic utterance that it is much better for a nation to die standing on its feet than to live on its bended knees." Mr. Amery insults Indian intelligence when he says that the August declaration is something superior to the Atlantic Charter. Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant characterised the statement of Mr. Amery as a huge joke to befool Indians. India has as much right to be the mistress of her own destinies as any other country in the world. If the signatories to the Atlantic Charter and those who have confirmed their adherence to it wish to "win peace and not lose it as in the last war," they should ungrudgingly come forward and say 'We offer you Indians for what we fight.' "Political subjection is moral degradation, not for countries overrun by Hitler but for countries which are in a dependent position like India," and India cannot continue to lead a life of subservience indefinitely.



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## A WORD IN EXPLANATION

Whether great or not, whether historic or not, there can never be two opinions that 1942 was an unforgettable year. It has taught us a lot that we can never forget. The Congress has emerged, not altogether unscathed but definitely wiser out of this fiery ordeal. As practical men we must put our experiences to utmost advantage. It is with this object in view that I have been speaking and writing ever since my release a year ago on the subject of organisational reconstruction of the Indian National Congress. The pages that follow are just a humble effort to present the whole case in one place and I shall be happy if this effort at least provokes thought among my Congress friends.

S. K. PATIL.

Congress House,  
September 20, 1945.





# I

## AUGUST 1942 AND AFTER

Whatever might be the net result in political values of our national awakening of 1942, it cannot be denied that after 1857 it was the greatest mass movement with all the elements of a people's revolution in it. After an event has taken place there are many political *Pandits* who can argue about its *pros* and *cons* and point out mistakes both of purpose and organisation. The real and authentic history of August 1942 has yet to be written. It will surely be written one day when the dust of the present political controversy has settled down and people are in a mood to judge things dispassionately and in their correct perspective. It is, however, the duty of those to whose lot it had fallen to be the actors in this great national upheaval to review the situation a little more closely, if only to get wiser by the experience. There is a vast majority of Congressmen in the country who are proud of this mass movement because of the supreme sacrifices and sufferings through which the nation had to pass and which it did with remarkable courage and faith which are the greatest assets of a national struggle. The top-most Congress leaders who have been released from their enforced detention after three years have been vying with one another to share the responsibility of this phenomenal mass awakening and spontaneous mass action. It is neither the purpose of this *brochure* to discuss the details of the movement nor to pronounce any judgment on anybody's action. The purpose is to have an objective survey of

the political developments that have taken place in this country since August 9, 1942, the day on which India's national leadership was put under arrest *en masse*.

There are leaders and followers in the Congress organisation who might rightly claim that the August movement has resulted in what may be called a political success. It may be so. If by success is meant that the nation has progressed towards our cherished goal of Complete Independence, we have no doubt achieved success in that limited sense. Every movement of direct action in a revolutionary struggle does strengthen a nation. It is, however, no use at this stage wasting our time in futile discussion whether the end of the 1942 movement was a success or otherwise. Nor would it serve any purpose at this stage to discuss whether the movement of August 1942 was a movement started by Congress or somebody else. Whosoever might be responsible for starting the movement, the fact remains that there was in 1942 the greatest national movement of our times and it has left a distinct and indelible impress on the political life of this country. A large number of Congressmen and friends of the Congress who participated in this phenomenal mass awakening have done acts of bravery and sacrifice of which any people can be proud. And yet all this was done in the absence of any central directive or dependable guidance. The nation entered upon the movement in a spirit which was aptly described by Mahatma Gandhi as 'DO or DIE'. We were out to get our Complete Independence, no matter what it cost. We asked our rulers to QUIT INDIA bag and baggage so that this country might be free for the sons and daughters of the soil to live. If that was the immediate objective of this great national movement, surely we have not achieved it in any real sense. The nation has failed in reaching the great objective which it

had set before its eyes when it undertook to make the untold sacrifices which it did. We as a nation, conscious of our growing strength and pledged to win our independence by our sweat and toil, must examine the causes which robbed us of our expected success. It is no use arguing about the fact which is beyond dispute that we have come out unsuccessful in this great movement. I do not deny for a moment that we have taken a few more strides on the way to our political emancipation. But that is not the real measure of success, and surely, it must not be the measure of those who gave their lives so that free India should live for ever.

Whatever may be the other reasons which ultimately contributed to our failure, the one which strikes me as the most obvious was our organisational unpreparedness. No doubt there was a great atmosphere for an all-out political movement of direct action in 1942. The world was at the parting of the ways. Great events had taken place and were taking place both in the world and in our own country. The Japanese military roller was mercilessly pressing on the vast tracts of land which for centuries belonged to the powerful Western nations. The historic Burmese land was completely run over and the hordes of Japanese army were at the Eastern gates of India. While all this was happening, India could not have sat supine, helplessly dependent on the military might of Britain to stem the in-rushing tide. Such confidence in its military genius was not created by the British army anywhere in the early years of war. This was the background of the movement of August 1942. If the Congress had not taken any steps at this critical hour of our national history to organise the people of this country for country-wide national resistance against the Japanese aggression, the posterity would have been justified in condemning the

Congress for its unpardonable indifference and inaction. It is easy to be wise after the event. We are all glad to-day that victory ultimately went to the Allied arms. But surely, it would have been dangerous to predict events with anything like an accuracy in August 1942. The Congress, therefore, was perfectly justified in taking the step that it took in passing the Resolution of August 8. If Britain had helped this country in organising a real national resistance which a people's government alone could have successfully done, perhaps, the history of war would have been different, not so much from the point of view of success but in the contents of that success. Britain would not allow organisation of such national resistance, and hence the movement of August 1942.

It will take long to forget those hectic days of August 1942 when the whole nation was literally boiling with indignation born of its utter helplessness in the face of gravest danger. There was a strong desire to do something and that too promptly. Mahatma Gandhi had stirred up the revolutionary spirit of the people by his inspiring writings in the *Harijan*. Everything was ready for a national upheaval. There was the atmosphere and even more than that there was the people's determination. What was lacking was the strength and ability of our organisation to control and direct a mass struggle of such immense dimensions.

Congressmen who are naturally and justifiably proud of the happenings of 1942 and the great part played in them by the nation as a whole and particularly by our younger generation ought not to commit the mistake of forgetting the wood for the trees. It must be realised after a close examination of these happenings that the organisational strength behind this great national upheaval was very little, if at all. The response came from



country to a pitch where it had assumed a fanatical fervour. The young generation of the twenties was moved by Gandhian technique as by nothing else. It was entirely due to this great experiment of mass awakening that Gandhiji brought about during those years, under the Flag of the Congress, that we had the successful movements of direct political action such as the Flag *Satyagraha* of Nagpur in 1923, the Bardoli *Satyagraha* in 1928 and the first Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. We had the second Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932 but it was by no means an unqualified success. The forces were now gathering inside our organisation which clamoured for a reorientation of the Congress policy and programme.

There are always two mentalities in every big national movement. They can be described as the 'Parliamentary' and the 'Revolutionary.' It is not correct to say that these mentalities raised their heads in our Congress politics for the first time in 1934. They were there even before but the conflict between them had not come to an open clash owing to the great influence which Gandhiji wielded on the rank and file of Congressmen. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932 proved to be of a longer duration and for that reason, among others, it became impossible to successfully arrest the demoralisation which had set in. It then became impossible to avoid the open clash between the Parliamentary and the Revolutionary mentalities. The year 1934 proved to be a fateful year for the Congress in more than one way. The Civil Disobedience Movement had come to a stand-still. The Congress was wholly suppressed and a wave of pessimism had come over the country. Gandhiji had directed

capable. The leaders of the Parliamentary mentality had their way and they succeeded in taking the Congress with them, with the blessings of Gandhiji, to parliamentary politics. A Parliamentary Board was appointed and elections to the Central Legislative Assembly were successfully fought. Perhaps as a counterblast to this, came the Congress Socialist Party in the same year, which claimed to be the exponent of the Revolutionary mentality. The open conflict between these two mentalities in this year was the beginning of many of the evils from which our great organisation has been suffering ever since. The party politics which was unknown to our organisation until then now came in with a vengeance. The Congress Socialists did not stop with merely an additional stress on their special ideology or their different methods of work if they had any such methods. The leaders claiming to be the exponents of the Revolutionary mentality created what later on became a water-tight and fool-proof organisation within the Congress ranks. They had a constitution of their own and a special loyalty and a special programme for their organisation. However attractive these might have then appeared to a section of the younger generation infuriated by the conduct of the Parliamentarians, they inevitably resulted in creating lack of faith and indiscipline in the rank and file of the Congress workers.

Close on the heels of the Congress Socialist Party came the Communist Party, also as an independent party within the Congress organisation. The reasons for this are not far to seek. The Congress Socialists came into direct conflict with the Communists in the labour field. Being a Party within the Congress, the Congress Socialists were using the Congress name and influence for getting a foothold among the workers. The Communists thought that

they could also repeat the experiment to their advantage and hence the entry of the Communists into our national organisation. After the Communists, came the Royists as a separate Party with its plan and programme. The storm then went on gathering. The forces of indiscipline and disruption went on gaining momentum. Then came the episode of Subhas Babu and the formation of 'Forward Bloc' within the Congress. This was followed by an agglomeration of these dissident parties into a solid bloc which came to be known as the 'Left Consolidation.' It was this hotch-potch combination of various disgruntled elements in the Congress which succeeded in electing Subhas Babu to the Presidential gadi of the Tripuri Session in 1938. The Congress was now fast heading towards an organisational disaster. The Tripuri Session of the Indian National Congress was the height of the forces of indiscipline and disruption within our ranks. During all these years, the Congress organisation was hopelessly suffering from want of adequate attention. There was no attempt made to put the organisation on a sound and scientific basis. Most of our leaders, both old and young, had allowed themselves to be exploited by one or the other party within the Congress and so they had no time to look to the work of proper organisation of the Congress.

Right in the middle of this organisational weakness of the Congress almost amounting to chaos brought about by dissident forces, came the Parliamentary elections to the Provincial Assemblies. Here again I maintain that if the Congress succeeded in winning these elections in seven out of eleven provinces, very little credit for this great result goes to the organisational strength of the Congress. It was the magic of the name of Mahatma Gandhi and the lightning electioneering campaign of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with his undoubted hold on the mass mind, which



contributed more than anything else to this great success of the Congress in the provincial elections. The country will never forget the most wonderful work done by Jawaharlal by his country-wide election tours. What I maintain—and that too with the knowledge of the working of our organisation—is that Congress as an organisation had very little to contribute to this success.

The functioning of the Congress Ministries in seven provinces, and for some time eight, did not result in consolidating the organisational strength of the Congress. We had formed the Ministries with the two main objects, namely, to break the Act of 1935 and to serve the people through the Congress organisation thereby strengthening that organisation. We must admit that we succeeded in neither of these two objects. We could not break the Act; nor could we strengthen the Congress. We may be forgiven for not being able to break the Act but our inability to take the people with us and consolidate the Congress ranks is, indeed, unforgivable. After this first Parliamentary experiment of 27 months, the Congress emerged as a much weaker institution than it was before it accepted office. In most of the Provinces the differences between the Congress Ministries and the Provincial Congress Committees were very acute. If they did not explode in a conflagration, it was because of the great influence of the Central Parliamentary Board headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress Working Committee and last but not the least, Gandhiji.

Before the Congress had any time to set its house in order organisationally, the great World War II broke out in 1939. We were taken off our feet and any organisation of our institution became almost impossible. One event followed another in rapid succession giving us neither any chance nor breathing space to build up our ranks. Our

wily rulers who have perfected the art of living and prospering on our weaknesses did not allow this opportunity to slip without taking fullest advantage of it. This is the reason why the movement of Individual *Satyagraha* of 1940 could not gather sufficient momentum in spite of the masterly guidance of our great Leader. Many of our colleagues in the Legislatures who had joined us in fair weather, could not stand the test of a real trial when it came. It was in these circumstances that the Individual *Satyagraha* movement came to an end in December 1941 after the release of Congress prisoners.

Even the short period of eight months that was at the disposal of the Congress between December 1941 and August 1942 was not judiciously used by us in reorganising our forces. We acted as if we had completely lost control over ourselves. There was no move for any national programme which would consolidate our ranks and arrest the growing fissiparous tendencies in the organisation. During these eight months we did take part in some good activities such as helping the people in organising themselves for self-protection against the danger of aerial bombing. But this was neither here nor there because we were not able to remove the organisational weaknesses which had taken hold of our Institution. Before we could set ourselves to do any organisational work, came the famous Cripps offer in April 1942 and our rejection of it for very sound national reasons. Events were now heading for a crisis of the first magnitude; the clouds in the political horizon were gathering fast and threatening to break out any moment. The leaders like Gandhiji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and others were making herculean effort to keep up and even to increase the spirit of resistance in the people. It was this spirit of resistance created by the

articles of *Harijan* and mass meetings addressed by leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel which was responsible for the political tempo of August 1942. I do not think that the Congress organisation as an organisation could justifiably take any credit for it. In these circumstances, if the nation did not emerge successful out of the struggle of 1942, we have not to blame the nation for it. In all conscience, we have to blame our Congress machinery during the last 10 years. It is no use blaming the past. Like practical men we must rise to the occasion and make the present and future completely ours. The experiences of 1942 have given us many lessons. They have opened our eyes. They have shown us where our strength lies and what and where our weaknesses are. The Congress leaders must submit themselves to a process of serious heart-searching if they want their organisation to become a really efficient and fighting organisation capable of delivering the goods for the country. They must immediately set themselves to reconstruct the Congress organisationally on very sound and scientific lines. This brings us to the essential bases of re-organisation.

### BASES OF RE-CONSTRUCTION

According to me, the fundamental bases of our organisational reconstruction are:

- (i) A unified Congress, loyal to its great mission of complete national independence without any party or group formations within its ranks.
- (ii) Active and unswerving faith in the national leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in all its implications and particularly those of truth and non-violence.

- (iii) A well-planned national programme of a limited period to the fulfilment of which all Congressmen must pledge themselves.

The political issues before the country are now as clear as crystal. We are, whether we will it or not, heading towards the ultimate climax of our political struggle. India cannot afford to be a slave for any long time. The nation's urge for freedom is hourly stiffening. It must find expression in a political movement. If the Indian National Congress is not going to formulate and regulate that expression, who else will? The Congress alone can claim the legacy of the nation's will to freedom. The Congress must not fail the country in this supreme hour of her need. The fight before us is very straight and there is no room for any doubt as to the issues involved. Our rulers, clever as they are, are systematically and inexorably consolidating their forces to give a battle to the forces of resistance in the country. Those who could not go the whole hog with us have already changed their loyalties and taken their places with the Government, directly or indirectly. The confusion of party politics within the Congress has also considerably cleared. I have not the shadow of doubt that the Communists and the Royists will not be with us in the struggle to come. They have left us for good. There is such a fundamental difference between the ideologies and more particularly, the methods of work, between us and them that any superimposed union is bound to result in unsavoury consequences. If the Communist Party is really honest to the ideology of communism its place is outside the ranks of the Congress. To remain outside the Congress ranks does not necessarily mean conflict; much less does it mean any enmity. The Communists will be rendering a real service to the principles of communism if they operate as an independent

party outside the Congress organisation. Incidentally they will be doing useful service to Congress also. There is nothing much to argue about the Royists. Their influence in country's politics is almost negligible, and what little used to be there is fast dying out.

I am absolutely certain that after the great experience of these fateful years of war, the leaders of the 'Forward Bloc' will once again come into the Congress fold and will give us the benefit of their great influence and drive. There remains then the Congress Socialist Party. In this great national movement of 1942, the members of this Party and other Congressmen have been comrades in arms. We have identified our interests and our political aspirations in a common struggle. We have lived together, bled together and even died together in this great struggle. I do not think there is any difference in our ideologies which we cannot adjust for common good. In fact, there is only one ideology for both of us and that is to wrest our complete freedom at the earliest possible moment from the unwilling hands of our rulers. If there were any small differences as to the methods of work and loyalty to leadership, these have also completely disappeared in this great movement. Is there anything now that should keep us apart as separate parties quarrelling among ourselves and thereby weakening discipline and solidarity of our organisation? My experience of the last 12 months has confirmed my conviction with which I came out of the jail that hereafter in Congress politics what are known as the orthodox Congressmen and the Congress Socialists are going to work together, hand in hand, with a common programme and for a common goal. Even if there should be any small differences as to the emphasis on this or that item of a national programme, these can be relegated to the cold storage during the time India

is struggling for her national emancipation. Let these small differences and small quarrels be suspended until we achieve our goal of complete independence. I, therefore, believe in a unified and united Congress in which there is enough scope for free political expression and no conflict of political ideologies. I have great hopes about the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party. I am sure they will dissolve the Party and take their rightful place in the hierarchy of the Congress organisation.

### THE LEADERSHIP

Then comes the question of leadership. The proper leadership for a revolutionary struggle is the most important factor. Luckily for us we have got a leader who has for the last quarter of a century become the biggest rallying point for all forces which stand for national resistance. I do not think that the question of leadership for the Congress is a point in dispute at all. Mahatma Gandhi's leadership is the greatest good fortune of this country. When an appeal is made to the people asking them to rally round the leadership and to develop an unswerving faith in it, our usual critics and fault-finders read in that appeal what they like to call 'a familiar ring of Fascism or Nazism'. It has become a fashion of these days both in this country and outside that whenever critics want to run you down they must begin by calling you a 'Fascist' and your methods 'Totalitarian'. I maintain that there is nothing fascist or totalitarian in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. If there is any leadership in the present-day world which is thoroughly democratic and which entirely depends on moral sanctions, it is the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. More millions of masses follow him today than any single leader in the world, not because he holds any power of which they are afraid but

because his leadership and the way of his life appeal to most of them. So far as the Congress is concerned I do not think there can be any dispute about his leadership. It is he, more than anybody else, who has turned the Indian National Congress into a gigantic mass organisation. It is he who has given us the conception of *Swaraj*. It is he who has taught us to walk erect as patriotic sons and daughters of this country. What is independence is very often a vague idea to ignorant masses who form the bulk of the population of any country and particularly of this country. Gandhiji has removed the vagueness of Indian independence (*Swaraj*) by explaining it to the masses in terms of its concrete contents which even the ignorant masses can understand. He shuns all authority and even popularity. By no stretch of imagination his leadership of the forces of resistance in this country can be dubbed as Fascist or authoritarian. The Congress has accepted his leadership, and we Congressmen are developing an increasing faith in it. He has been leading the country for the last 25 years from one success to another. The proud heritage of national consciousness and strength which the Congress possesses today is mostly, if not entirely, of his making.

Gandhiji's leadership has been almost universally accepted by all Congressmen. But the mere acceptance of a leadership is one thing, and the readiness to follow it unflinchingly and in all circumstances is quite the other. This fact does not seem to have been realised by all those who claim to accept Gandhiji's leadership. As we march on to our goal we notice some confusion of thought about the essence of this leadership. I am afraid there is much too loose thinking on this subject. The happenings of 1942 have given us considerable food for thought on this question. Since the Congress took to direct action for

the attainment of our Independence, Gandhiji has been unanimously chosen as the Leader to guide and direct every campaign of direct action. He is the master of technique so far as *Satyagraha*—the only weapon with which Congress fights—is concerned. It was no wonder, therefore, that the Congress chose him to lead the historic ‘Quit India’ struggle. That leadership was unanimously accepted by the All-India Congress Committee in the Resolution of August 8, 1942. Although Gandhiji was arrested and put under detention long before he could give any guidance or direction to the country, there was nothing to doubt the general principles of his guidance. The one principle which he has taught the country to follow in all struggles of direct action he has hitherto led, is the principle of non-violence in thought, word and deed, as he puts it. In the numerous articles that he wrote in *Harijan*, creating a proper atmosphere for an all-out national resistance, he was never tired of emphasizing strictest adherence to non-violence in all circumstances. To him any departure from non-violence is almost the end of the struggle. Congressmen and others who participated in this struggle had no doubt whatsoever in their minds that their conduct in this struggle had to be perfectly non-violent if they expected this great struggle to succeed in the end.

In the light of the experiences of all that happened in 1942, we have to examine whether we were truly loyal to the leadership of Gandhiji in some of our actions. I am not raising this point simply with a view to criticise or find fault with what happened. I have always maintained—and that is the correct position for anybody to take—that whosoever did anything in this movement, although not always in conformity with the strictest code of non-violence, did it in a moment of uncontrollable ex-



citement and not out of any intention of knowingly disobeying the leadership. Those who might have acted even outside the four corners of non-violence did so with a patriotic motive because they thought that it was perhaps a quicker way of reaching their objective. Had not Gandhiji often told them that even a violent resistance to evil was any day better than a cowardly submission to it? That is all sound logic as it goes but it must be recognised at the same time that no amount of defence that we may give for some of our actions can absolve us from our responsibility to loyally carry out the instructions of our Leader. We must develop and show in our actions unflinching faith in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, if with the help of that leadership we mean to attain our Complete Independence. The historic struggle of 1942 has once again demonstrated, if any such demonstration were necessary, the unique revolutionary character of Gandhiji's leadership. That leadership is our greatest national asset. Let us capitalize it as much as we can and speedily reach our goal. This is the reason why I consider Gandhiji's leadership as one of the important bases of the organisational reconstruction of the Congress.

I am sure nobody seriously believes that what we have come through is the last struggle in any sense. The final struggle for *Swaraj* has to be fought in the near future if it becomes necessary. And who can say that it will not be necessary, looking to the present attitude of our rulers? All our efforts for re-organisation of our forces must, therefore, be directed to that one central fact, namely, the final struggle for our complete national independence.

### THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The third important basis of our re-organisation is the National Programme. We have had many program-

mes in the past. Under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress has been continuously kept in action. We have built up our national life by following the national programmes which Gandhiji has given us from time to time. We have, however, not critically examined the organisation of the Congress as we find it today. In my opinion, that organisation has become very weak and loose from inside. As I have explained elsewhere, the magic which is in the name of 'Congress' for millions of masses in this country is not necessarily the result of the working of our Institution. That magic is mostly, if not entirely, due to the immense personal popularity of our leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and others. We are exceptionally lucky in having such galaxy of first-rate leaders at a critical period of our national history. But how long can a nation of 400 millions live almost entirely on the reputation and popularity of its leaders? We must, no doubt, use the popularity of our leaders for strengthening our organisation. But that alone will not suffice. In all the movements of direct action that we have undertaken during the last 25 years we notice that the spirit of resistance and sacrifice does not go beyond a limited scope. We must seriously examine if it is so and why it is so. Unless that spirit pervades millions of our people it is impossible for us as a nation to make any real headway towards our goal. Here comes in the strength of the organisation. What generally happens is this: The Congress decides to go for a direct action and elects Gandhiji as the General of the 'National Army.' Gandhiji gives the call and lays down the programme of action. Other leaders promptly follow the lead of Gandhiji and are immediately arrested and locked in prisons. A couple

of lakhs of other Congressmen who have always remained loyal to the Congress take part in the struggle and go to jails. After this the struggle abruptly comes to an end. There is all the sympathy and good-will in the country for the Congress. Millions hope and pray for its success. But somehow or other they do not act with the result that our movement comes to a dead stop. We have not yet created sufficient stamina in the nation to continue the fight until it ends in a success. We cannot ignore this factor any more. We have something like 50 lakhs of Congressmen on our registers. But at no time more than a couple of lakhs came forward to take part in a programme of direct action. We have to find out why it is so and that is, in my opinion, the work of the Congress organisation. We cannot afford to keep the Congress organisationally weak. We have always claimed that the Congress is the nation. The time has come to make good that claim in action. We must make Congress the most gigantic representative institution of people capable of delivering the goods for the nation. It is for this purpose that we must have a dynamic plan of action during peaceful times. If we do not toil hard during times of peace, we shall have to bleed more during times of struggle. The Congress must, therefore, formulate a programme of activities which will result in building up the organisational strength of the Congress. We must go in for as complete and all-sided a programme as we possibly can make it. Gandhiji has given us his 17-point constructive programme. Even for the fulfilment of this programme we must have a well-planned scheme of making our organisation much stronger and much more representative of the various sections of our masses than it is at present. A mere talk or even a resolution about the programme would not do. We must have something on the model of the first Five-year Plan

of Soviet Russia. I am not suggesting any slavish imitation of any country. A time-limited programme has its own dynamics. It has a thrill of its own and Russia has successfully demonstrated this to the world. We are a fighting nation impatient for our Independence. We cannot afford to have a programme spread over a long time. Very often we are not the choosers of circumstances. We may not be given a continuous respite of five years by the Government for the completion of our projected programme. But surely we must make a beginning in real earnest. I would suggest that the Congress should make a programme of organisational re-construction and constructive activities of a period limited to three years in the first instance. Anything less than three years would not be a programme because we may not be able to see the good results of it in a shorter time. If we are serious about our programme, there is no reason why we should not complete it during three years according to plan and build up, as a result, formidable strength for the Congress. This programme can be periodically reviewed and necessary adjustments made. I shall now try to indicate what should be the main features of this Three-Year National Programme.

## CHANGES IN OUR CONSTITUTION

Our programme of reconstruction of our organisation must naturally start with our Constitution. The Constitution of the Indian National Congress has had quite an interesting and chequered history. First made in 1920 at the Nagpur Session of the Congress, it has gone through occasional changes, very often of a revolutionary type. When the Constitution was first drafted in 1920 we had a very few patterns of democratic constitutions of non-official institutions to draw from. However, the scheme of

the Constitution was intended to be as democratic as it possibly could be. The subsequent changes that have been made in the constitution had pronounced trend towards democratization. There has always been an attempt to give wider powers to lower strata of our constitutional structure. At the same time the changes made from time to time are also designed to make the administration of Congress institutions as efficient and business-like as possible.

For a fighting organisation such as ours it was necessary to introduce safeguards in the Constitution against doubtful elements coming in. The first five years' experience of the Constitution showed that some bad elements had already come in because it was easy to do so under the provisions of the Constitution. It was with a view to discourage these elements and introduce greater discipline and honesty in the organisation that the Khaddar Clause was introduced in the Constitution. Under this clause a primary member could not vote at any Congress election unless he was a habitual wearer of hand-spun and hand-woven Khaddar. The restriction imposed by means of this clause was to discourage the malpractices which had gradually but systematically entered in our elections. The Khaddar Clause did not succeed in achieving the purpose for which it was intended. On the contrary, its execution brought in more and newer malpractices than before in the elections. Clever people made systematic efforts to circumvent the clause in as many ways as they could. Honest people who were loyal to the Congress would not vote at the elections because they were not habitual wearers of Khaddar. This resulted in reducing the primary membership of the Congress, with the result that the Khaddar Clause was ultimately withdrawn. During the years 1925 to 1934 there were so many complaints all

over the country about corrupt and dishonest practices that Gandhiji and the Working Committee were seriously thinking about some revolutionary changes in the constitution, which would effectively put a stop to all these doubtful practices. Thus came the big change in the constitution in 1934 at the 48th Session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay. The changes brought about this time were of a very sweeping nature. Mahatma Gandhi was the sole author of these changes. The underlying idea of the amendments which he proposed to the constitution was to make the Congress organisation a neat and efficient body capable of functioning as a fighting organisation. Gandhiji was of opinion that only those people should enrol as primary members who had sincere love for the Congress and who were prepared to make some sacrifices, however small, towards attainment of *Swaraj* which was the Congress goal. The most radical of these amendments was: that a person desirous of enrolling himself as a primary member of the Congress had to go to a Congress office to fill in the form and register his name. The idea behind this registration at the office was to put a stop to bogus membership which was being enrolled in previous years merely for the purpose of election and which naturally encouraged all manner of corrupt practices. So also an attempt was made to restrict the number of delegates to a small number of not more than 2,000. The sessions of the Congress were year after year becoming so unwieldy that it was impossible to carry on any real deliberations at these sessions. It was thought that if the number of delegates was reduced to a small figure the essential deliberative nature of the session could be preserved. The reduction in the number of delegates would also reduce the number of the members of the All-India Congress Committee. Another important change introduced for the first time in

our constitution in this year was to make some sort of manual labour an obligatory duty for every congressman holding an elective position in the Congress organisation. According to this amendment nobody could hold an elective position unless he was doing some kind of manual labour personally. The manual labour prescribed by Gandhiji was spinning although later on many other forms of manual labour were suggested and accepted by the Congress. If this scheme of the Constitution was given a fair and honest trial for a period of 5 years, possibly, out of its working could have emerged an energetic and efficient Congress organisation. As it happened, attempts were immediately started by those who did not like the rigorous nature of this constitution to water it down in every possible manner. The very next year the number of delegates was increased, the clause relating to manual labour was so circumvented that it became almost inoperative and was consequently dropped. The purpose for which Gandhiji sought to introduce these radical changes was completely lost sight of and we once again went back to our old habits and practices.

The movement of 1942 has, I am sure, left many of us wiser even as regards our constitution. It is becoming increasingly evident that our constitution must be radically altered. While keeping intact the essential features of democracy, we must make our Congress executives really businesslike bodies capable of running the Congress administration very efficiently and carrying out the programme and instructions of the Indian National Congress smoothly and according to the plan. We have before us the experience of a quarter of a century of the functioning of a democratic constitution. We have seen its good points and bad ones too. Since we are now on the threshold of big changes we must take up the question of amend-

ing our constitution to suit these changes. In constitution-making, we must avoid the mistakes which we committed in the past. The masses of this country are being increasingly drawn towards the Congress. Their love and loyalty to the Institution have got to be encouraged in every possible manner. The simplest and the most practical method of demonstrating that love is to become a 4-anna member of Congress and thereby subscribe to its creed of attaining *Poorna Swaraj* by all peaceful and legitimate means. Any attempt, therefore, to restrict the primary membership will not be a sound policy. Our constitution must be very broad-based so far as the primary membership is concerned. We must make planned and systematic efforts to get as many members on our registers as we possibly can. But as we go on higher and higher, the constitutional structure must assume the form of a pyramid. The essential restrictions to secure efficient working of the administration must, therefore, apply to the higher strata of our organisation. We must impose certain obligatory duties on those who choose to occupy elective posts in the organisations.

The members of the Congress executives are in every sense the leaders of the organisation. The leadership ought to be regarded more as a responsibility than a privilege or a mere fruit of labour. A weak leadership must necessarily result in a weak organisation. The creation of a proper leadership, therefore, is a problem which must be scientifically studied and correctly solved. The proper leadership cannot be created unless we have a constitution which helps in the process of its creation. Those who come to assume this leadership by contesting the elective positions must undertake to loyally carry out the resolutions and the instructions of the Congress. If they have any mental reservations about these they must be made





not intended in the least to impose any artificial restrictions either on democratic thought or action. The liberty of democratic thought and action ought not to degenerate into an unbridled licence for saying and doing anything one likes. Our experience of the last few years must teach us better than that. There is one more argument in favour of the abolition of party formations within the Congress, which requires to be seriously considered. Why do these separate parties become necessary in our organisation? Because, perhaps, their sponsors feel that the ideologies they represent may fare better by forming separate parties inside the Congress than otherwise. This is an entirely wrong presumption. I am prepared to join issue with any one who says that socialism has had any better chance in the Congress because of the existence of the Congress Socialist Party. On the contrary, I maintain that it could have certainly had a better chance for its success if it did not suffer from the handicap of inevitable party prejudices. I am sure, Congressmen will ponder over this question in an unbiased mood and decide once for all what is best for the Congress. I maintain that the continuance of various rival parties within the structure of the Congress is an unmixed evil. The parties must go if the Congress is to live and grow as a fighting organisation.

## FULL-TIME NATIONAL SERVICE

The big programme of mass education and constructive activities that we contemplate requires for its successful fulfilment a very large body of workers. We must create this army of workers out of those who are prepared to give their whole time for National Service. The experience during the last twenty-five years, and particularly of recent years, has taught us that we cannot run such a gi-

gantic fighting machine like the present-day Indian National Congress with the help of a few occasional workers. The duties and responsibilities of our organisation have increased beyond imagination during recent years. Unless we run our organisation like a business institution demanding highest efficiency from those who serve it, we cannot succeed in achieving anything big or concrete. We must keep the nation active and always on the alert. A time has come when we must start thinking in terms of running the administration of this country. Surely, the task of running that administration is going to fall on our shoulders the moment we achieve our independence. Our work today among the masses will afford us the necessary training for the important role which we shall be called upon to play in a free India. For that purpose we must enrol and train a large body of workers prepared to give full-time service to the nation. This must be regarded as a national service, and no efforts must be spared to make it as informed and efficient as possible. This would require lakhs of young men and young women voluntarily coming forward and offering their services to the organisation. The creation of such a national service is bound to cost us a very heavy expenditure and we must from now think of the ways and means of meeting this expenditure.

### DECENTRALIZING THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We must produce a practical scheme of meeting our commitments of the National Service that we shall have to immediately organise. Suggestions have been made in the past to create a large all-India fund for the purpose. To me it seems a very difficult and impracticable proposition. Our requirements are very great and



## THE WORKING COMMITTEE.

Our process of organisational reconstruction must, in my opinion, begin with the re-organisation of the Congress Working Committee, popularly known as the 'Congress High Command.' The Working Committee has had a very romantic history during the last 25 years. It is also known as the 'Cabinet of the Indian National Congress' and, in a sense, it does function in the capacity and with the authority of a Cabinet. Speaking strictly constitutionally, the Working Committee ranks third in the constitutional authority of the Congress. The first is the Plenary Session of the Indian National Congress; then comes the All-India Congress Committee which is the 'Parliament of the Congress' and after that the Working Committee which can be called the Cabinet of that Parliament, following the model of the British Parliament. Although in rank it is the third biggest authority, in the actual exercise of authority the Working Committee, according to me, is the most powerful single unit of the Indian National Congress. It wields authority and influence which are second to no other unit. Never during the last quarter of a century has its authority been challenged by anybody. An incident which looks like an exception to this rule was the election of Babu Subhas Chandra Bose as the President of the Tripuri Session of the Congress. Subhas Babu contested this election against the wishes, more implied than express, of the majority of the Working Committee and got elected to the highest position of the Congress. This was a real challenge both to the authority as well as the popularity of the Working Committee. But the success achieved by Subhas Babu proved to be a short-lived one. Within a few months of his election, he had to resign his presidentship because he could not carry the majority of the A.I.C.C. with him. This

incident has successfully established the fact that the authority of the Working Committee in Congress affairs is supreme and unquestionable.

The main reason why the Working Committee came to assume and successfully hold such an enormous power is the unique influence of Gandhiji's personality in the Congress organisation. Ever since he has assumed the virtual leadership of the Congress in 1920, all Working Committees are selected after taking his advice. All Presidents of the Indian National Congress since 1920, barring the President of the Tripuri Session, have been elected on Gandhiji's advice. Gandhiji himself used to be a member of the Working Committee until 1934 in which year he resigned even the 4-anna membership of the Congress and thus ceased to be a member of the Working Committee. Although he is no longer himself a member, his influence over the Working Committee and the Congress in general has been even more after 1934 than before. The position that the Working Committee enjoys today in the affairs of the Congress is entirely due to the unmatched popularity of this great man. Being the greatest democrat yet born, his leadership, inspite of passage of time, has not shown the slightest tendency towards authoritarianism or power politics and moreover, the sanctions behind his unique authority are truly and absolutely moral.

In spite of the position which the Working Committee occupies today, there is a need for reorientation in the function of that body. The Working Committee consists of 15 members, more than half of whom have been sitting in that body ever since 1920. Until 1934 the members of the Working Committee used to be elected by the A.I.C.C. But since the present constitution was passed in 1934, it is the Congress President who nominates the members of his Cabinet for the year, of course, in consulta-

tion with Mahatma Gandhi. This is a perfectly democratic procedure because the Congress President is elected by a direct vote of 3,000 and odd delegates chosen in their turn by nearly 5 million voters from all parts of the country. There is nothing wrong in the procedure so far as the composition of this Committee is concerned. The re-orientation which I am venturing to suggest is not in respect of the composition of the Committee but in respect of the distribution of responsibilities. In the cabinet system all over the world there are two principles, namely, individual and joint responsibility on all questions of administration. Every member of the Cabinet is individually responsible for a particular portfolio and all are jointly responsible for the general policy of the state. Of course, the analogy cannot be exactly apposite because the Working Committee is not a Cabinet in the strict sense of that expression; nor is Congress a state. The analogy is taken only with a view to explain the position in regard to the functioning of this body. There is no allocation of responsibility as between the various members of the Working Committee. All are supposed to be responsible for everything that the Congress has to do. This is not, in my opinion, a very ideal state of affairs. No doubt the members of the Working Committee are the tallest men in our public life so far as ability and popularity go. I am not detracting from their greatness as leaders in suggesting this reform. The Congress affairs during recent years have become so varied and complex that the allocation of responsibility of various heads of our programme and administration among the members of the Working Committee is highly necessary in the interests of efficiency and smooth working. The volume of our work and responsibility has become so heavy that the old practice of leaving everything to the entire Cabinet has no longer

remained a safe or a practical policy. For instance, the Congress has now undertaken the responsibility of guiding the organisations and activities of various important elements in our society such as the Mazdoors, the Kisans, the Students, the States, etc. Almost every day some sort of consultation or guidance is necessary from the High Command. We have got to formulate policies and take quick decisions in regard to many questions as they crop up from day to day. There are a thousand and one complicated questions with reference to which expert advice may become necessary. Whom to consult for necessary guidance and advice unless there is some definite arrangement about it which is known to most of our workers? This is a serious handicap at the present moment. The situation has been further complicated after the great struggle of 1942. The Congress once again under Gandhiji's inspiration has decided to undertake the responsibility and work among all sections of the society. All this means organisation and expert advice from day to day. So long as the Working Committee was in jail and Mahatma Gandhi was out, congressmen used to consult him whenever any need for advice arose and he used to give such advice. After the release of the members of the Working Committee it is neither proper nor always practicable to rush to Gandhiji for advice on every question. This is a responsibility of the Working Committee and it must be undertaken by that body in as best and efficient a manner as possible. The fact that the whole of the Working Committee is responsible for everything does not conduce to efficiency of our organisation or facility of work. There must be division of responsibility amongst the various members of the Working Committee. There are two ways of doing it. One is the distribution of portfolios among the 15 members of the



Working Committee. It will then be easy for Congress Executives and other workers to refer their difficulties to the member in charge of a particular portfolio. Of course, the general policy and the principles would be determined as hitherto by the High Command as a whole sitting together from time to time as it does at present. But it is not possible to hold such meetings except 4 or 5 times a year. Advice and direction, however, will have to be given almost every day and hence the necessity of the creation of portfolios and proper allotment of responsibility to individual members of the Working Committee.

It may be argued that some of the members of the Working Committee, although they enjoy the fullest measure of popularity in the country, are not in a position to undertake any strenuous duties by reason of their age and health. Their influence, however, is a national asset and the country can ill-afford to do without their advice. It is, therefore, necessary to find some *via media* by which we can have our trusted leaders in the Cabinet and at the same time we can arrange to distribute responsibility by creating different portfolios.

There is something to be said, incidentally though, about the composition of the Working Committee with reference to various provinces. No doubt, by convention, the members of the Working Committee are chosen from different Provinces so that most of the Provinces may get representation on that important body. There are, however, 20 Congress Provinces and the number of the Working Committee is only 15. Some Provinces, therefore, have got to go almost permanently unrepresented. There is a growing feeling among the Provinces that every Province should have a representative on the High Command of the Congress. There is nothing wrong about

this feeling. The Congress has become so powerful during recent years that it is natural for a Province to feel that it should be represented in the highest counsels of the country. We have, therefore, to find out a compromise between these two systems. I make bold to suggest a compromise. While the High Command should continue to remain as at present constituted and exercise the authority it has hitherto been exercising, it is possible for our organisation to create an outer ring of the High Command consisting of persons selected by the High Command in charge of the various constructive and administrative activities. This means that there will be the Working Committee of the Congress as before and it will be responsible for laying down the general policy of the Congress. The Working Committee, however, will appoint one responsible person in charge of every important activity or group of activities. Such heads of activities will form what I call the outer ring of the High Command. The officials in charge of activities will be under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Working Committee and responsible to that body. In this outer ring it is possible to give representation to every Province. We have surely at least 20 heads of our activities and there can be one man for every Province. We need not restrict our number to 20. If competent people for doing this kind of work are available, in certain cases there can be even more than one seat for a single Congress Province. Among others I can suggest the following portfolios to be created almost immediately:

- (1) The Congress Organisation.
- (2) The Foreign Affairs.
- (3) Information and Propaganda.
- (4) Mazdoors.
- (5) Kisans.
- (6) Students.

- (7) Indian States.
- (8) Volunteers.
- (9) Organisation among Women.
- (10) Service to Harijans.
- (11) Khadi and Gramodyoga.
- (12) Basic Education.
- (13) Rashtrabhasha.
- (14) Provincial Languages.
- (15) Liquidation of Illiteracy.
- (16) Communal Unity.
- (17) Economic Equality.
- (18) National Service.
- (19) Health and Hygiene.
- (20) Prohibition.
- (21) Local Self-Government institutions.
- (22) Parliamentary Activities.
- (23) Education in General.
- (24) Trade, Commerce and Industry.

Other items can be added to this list whenever we are able to organise more activities. We can have occasional meetings of the men in charge of these various portfolios. They should work in the capacity of advisers to the High Command in respect of the portfolios entrusted to their charge. If the Congress Working Committee is reorganised on this model, I am certain, it is bound to lead to greater efficiency and better facility of work.

### THE EFFICIENCY DRIVE

The experience of the functioning of the Congress has shown that congressmen have not evinced any special regard for ability and efficiency. Those who form our executives in different Provinces are not particularly noted for their ability and efficiency. These two qualities are *sine qua non* of every successful organisation. We are

now living in a world in which these qualities are regarded as being absolutely necessary for the success of an organisation. In the selection of the members of our executives we must take care to see that we do not sacrifice quality for mere quantity. The quantity has, no doubt, its place in a political struggle. But it is the quality which will score in the long run. For the last several years most of our Committees are manned by people many of whom are less than average in the essential qualities of ability and efficiency of work. One often witnesses a sorry spectacle of office-bearers sticking like limpets to the various organisations in the Congress although they know that they are not fit to occupy the positions which they occupy. They won't move themselves nor would they allow anybody else to move. This has made many of our subordinate committees stereotyped both in composition as well as in the nature of their activities. This state of affairs must go if Congress is to live as a popular and fighting organisation. There must be a thoroughgoing purge of all our Committees which are useless and outmoded.

After the Working Committee comes the second-line leadership of the Congress, namely, the office-bearers of the various Provincial Congress Committees and District Congress Committees. The present second-line leadership in the country has remained in office in most places for well-nigh 25 years. It is almost a generation. It is not suggested that these people have not played their part in the making of our organisation. They have done it to the best of their abilities. But they have now reached the last limits of their utility to the organisation. It is no use sticking to a job if you cannot make a success of it. The executives all over the world rise or fall by the measure of success or otherwise they are able to achieve. The

ability to successfully carry out the programme of the Congress should be made the test for the continuance or otherwise of a person in an executive office. The standard of public life must be made very exacting if that public life is to result in a real benefit to the society. In the selection of its executive officers the Congress must show a decided preference for talent, ability and efficiency besides honesty and character. At present there is hardly any fear in the minds of office-bearers that they will have to quit their posts if they are not able to deliver the goods. Such a fear must be created in their minds if our affairs are to be conducted in an efficient manner.

## OUR FUTURE ADMINISTRATORS

There is an important aspect of re-organisation on which the Congress must concentrate its attention from now. For the last 60 years the Indian nation has been struggling to be free. Although we are not yet able to completely achieve our freedom, nobody dare deny that we have come very much near to it. Within the next few years, earlier than later, we are bound to be a free nation. What then? Free India will require thousands of able, intelligent and honest young administrators who will have to undertake the duties of carrying on the administration of this country in an able and efficient manner. How and where are these young administrators to be got when the need for them arises? That need is coming very soon and we must try from now to be able to supply it. The creation of a large army of administrators gifted with talent and initiative is not a simple task. It will require years of concentrated and well-directed efforts as also good deal of imagination and planning. It is high time the Congress realised its responsibility in this respect and set about fulfilling it.

The work that we have been doing in the name of the Congress during the last 25 years under Gandhiji's leadership was of one type. Hitherto we required thousands of men and women with courage and sacrifice, who would heroically fight the battle of Independence regardless of consequences. We had no administration to run and naturally we were not prepared for it. We have had in our midst great men and women who have made immense sacrifices and have gone through untold sufferings in the cause of freedom. So far as our work was restricted to the achievement of our Independence we could do very well with these men and women. But in future we shall have to look for new sets of people to perform different sets of jobs. People who are good fighters may not necessarily be good administrators. In fact they are not so and we had enough experience of it when for the first time in the history of our political agitation the Congress had to undertake the responsibility of forming governments in eight out of eleven administrative Provinces. We were not a free nation yet. Our responsibility for administration was also limited both in space and the substance of authority. Even then we had to find out several hundreds of administrators of character and integrity. Congressmen everywhere in India are well aware how far we succeeded in finding these administrators. This was our first experiment of running provincial administrations which we ran for a period of 27 months. We did our best to run that administration as efficiently as we could but I am afraid we were not always successful in fulfilling the expectations of the people. It was then that we realised that a time had come for the Congress to create future administrators for this country. Hitherto we have been able to draw in the Congress, young men of courage, sacrifice and suffering. Of course, these qualities are still es-

essential and we shall always need them even in a free India. But alongside of these qualities we must also be able to draw talent and ability into our organisation. When we think of filling the important administrative posts our list of such persons proves to be far short of our requirements. The cream of intelligentsia in India has not yet been drawn towards the Congress for reasons into which we need not go. It is our duty in future to so manage our affairs that we may be able to attract that cream towards the Congress. We must create conditions for this to happen:

Our workers in the Congress must understand to distinguish between the brave fighters and able administrators. It is possible that there may be a few people who are able enough to play both these roles equally well. But their number is bound to be very small and this fact has got to be recognised. In our scheme of re-organisation, therefore, we must give an important place to the task of training young men and women whose services will have to be recruited in the near future for the purposes of administration in a free India. There are lakhs of young students today who are anxious to serve their country in any capacity. We must take advantage of the unbounded enthusiasm and patriotism of these young people. We must arrange for a systematic and scientific training of these young men and women from now. Efforts in this direction must start immediately and the initiative must come from the High Command of the Congress.

## BROAD-BASING OUR ORGANISATION

We shall now consider several important items of our national programme, which call for immediate re-organisation. The new spirit of enthusiasm and determination that has been created by the mass awakening of

1942 must not be allowed to run waste. We must take the best advantage out of it in strengthening our organisation. The most elementary thing and yet the most essential in the scheme of re-organisation is the primary membership of the Indian National Congress. Millions of our countrymen who sign the Congress creed and enrol themselves as primary members form the broad base of our organisation. We have never made any systematic and well-planned attempt so far, to increase our primary membership. It will be remembered that in the year 1922 when Gandhiji gave a call for one crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and also for one crore of Congress membership, our membership registers had shot up to a figure which was more than a crore. In 1930 again, there was a big mass movement for enrolling Congress membership when most of the leaders were in jail. Then also our membership had gone to a crore. But these were temporary phases and we could not keep up the enthusiasm created on these special occasions. Our average membership all over the country has remained between 4 and 5 millions. No doubt this is numerically the biggest membership of any single organisation in the world. But that ought not to be our only satisfaction. India is a country of 400 millions. 4 million membership is only 1 per cent of the population. That only 1 per cent of people should enrol themselves for such a big cause as the national independence is not a very creditable thing either for the Congress or the country. We have to think out some plan of expanding this membership more or less on permanent lines. We always take pride in the fact that we have seven lakhs of villages. But to how many of these villages has the Congress gone? How can we succeed in any movement of direct action unless the Congress organisation has gone deep into seven lakhs of our villages? This is the



first task, therefore, which we must undertake. In the Three-Year Programme which we will be formulating we must take care to see that at the end of the third year there will not be a single village in this country where Congress has not established a Village Committee. Then alone we can style ourselves a real people's organisation. There are small villages and there are big villages in this country. If on an average every village enrolls 25 primary members we shall have a crore and three quarters of members on our primary registers all over the country. This is not impossible. There are certain villages which enroll something like two to three thousand members each, every year. While there are villages where there has been no enrolment at all because nobody has yet tried to do it. Taken by and all the average of 25 per village is, in my opinion, a very practical proposition. Added to this, there will be concentrated membership from the urban areas. We have hundreds of towns and scores of cities in this country. They can surely enroll about half a crore of membership. For the Three-Year Plan I would suggest that at the end of the first year we should aim at one crore membership; at the end of the second year, a crore and a half and at the end of the third year, two crores complete. This will be just five per cent of our population. If we succeed in doing this on a systematic and well-planned basis we shall be immensely strengthening our Institution. Out of 25 primary members in a village, 5 can form a Village Committee. When we are able to establish seven lakhs of Village Committees in this country our movement for national freedom is bound to go deep into the masses. It will then be impossible even for the mightiest foreign government to suppress it.

The money that we get from membership has never been regarded as an important factor. However, the

money has its own value and it does play its part in politics as in everything else. With two crores of membership, the Congress organisations all over, from cities to villages, we annually get fifty lakhs of rupees to spend on various Congress activities. This is not a small sum. We shall be able to do a lot of activities with the help of so much money in our hands. Besides, there will be at least two crores of people who will have openly declared their loyalty to the Indian National Congress and their faith in the cause of freedom which the Congress represents. As we go on higher up there will be Taluka and Tahsil Committees, and then, the District Congress Committees. We shall have a complete plan about the formation of these Committees as well. At the end of the third year there should not be a single Taluka or Tahsil which has not an elective committee of its own. All our Provincial Congress Committees cannot boast today of having such organisations in their respective territorial jurisdiction. The Provincial Congress Committees should start a regular survey of villages in their Provinces and also Talukas, Tahsils and other groups by whatever name they are known. On the basis of this statistical information they should make their plans of re-organisation. While selecting the executive committees for the higher grade of our organisations we must be particularly careful in choosing the right type of men. Bad men make bad organisations and *vice versa*. This is true everywhere in the world. The higher we go the greater must be our precaution in the choice of persons. The executives of the District Congress Committees are very important Congress bodies. Each executive has under its jurisdiction a population ranging from 5 to 50 lakhs. To organise such a large population for Congress work is, indeed, a very responsible and difficult job. We must, therefore, lay down some obligations.

for those who offer themselves for the executive positions in our District Congress Committees. An unqualified undertaking to carry out the resolutions and the instructions of the Congress and giving regular time to the service of the Congress ought to be among these obligations. Our local Congress leaders must be made to realise that Congress work has now become a full-time job. I am sure in the new drive that we shall be making, we shall get enough young men and women who would be prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of these District and subordinate organisations.

Our Provincial Congress Committees have, during the last 25 years, grown into very powerful organisations. They are capable of influencing the policy of the organisation. They do maintain some full-time workers. But that is not enough. We shall require a very large number of devoted full-timers for our work in future. The members of the Provincial Congress Committees are the delegates of the Indian National Congress and as such there is a heavy responsibility on their shoulders. Speaking constitutionally, they are the persons who lay down the national policy of the Congress. In making selection of these delegates we must take extreme care and precaution. Nobody who is not prepared to discharge the obligations incidental to a delegate's position ought to be selected for the job. The ability to 'deliver the goods' i.e., to carry out the allotted measure of programme, ought to be the test for every delegate who offers himself for election. If he fails to carry out his obligations he must not find a place in the next election. Then come the office-bearers and the members of the executive of the various Provincial Congress Committees. These are, in fact, persons from amongst whom the membership of the Working Committee, i.e., our top leadership is recruited. No precaution is

too great in making the right kind of selection for these top-grade Congress offices. Many of these are also the members of the All-India Congress Committee, and this makes a live and constant contact between the Provincial Congress Committees and the All-India Congress Committee possible.

There is one more aspect of our scheme of organisation which calls for special attention. Our present leadership of the Congress, almost all over the country, is the leadership which came into the organisation as far back as 1920. With the beginning of the non-violent non-cooperation movement in that year, many young people from colleges and other walks of life came forward to serve their country under the banner of the Indian National Congress. Many of these now occupy very high positions in the Congress organisation. They have remained at the helm of affairs for well-nigh 25 years. They have taken part in all the movements of direct action and have suffered great hardships for the cause of freedom. They were young, some of them in their teens and early twenties, when they joined the movement. Today they are middle-aged men and women and quite a number of them old persons. It is not fair to expect from these people the same active and energetic services as they were able to render in their younger days. A time has come in the affairs of the Congress when we must re-organise our second-line leadership as well. More arduous duties are awaiting us and for them we require younger and more energetic persons. I do not mean that we should be so imprudent and foolish as to lose the services of these veteran leaders. What I suggest is that we must introduce a lot of young blood in our organisation. There are hundreds of young men amongst us who are capable enough to undertake the responsibility of leadership. We must take these men and

put them in right places. If there are any inactive office-bearers, and I am afraid there are many, they must immediately quit the posts of responsibility. There is no room in the Congress hereafter for inactive and inefficient people, and so also for opportunists. It must be our constant endeavour to bring as many young people in our organisation as we possibly can. We must train these young men and women for the great responsibilities we want them to undertake. All this requires a well-laid-out plan. The Congress Working Committee must take the initiative in this planning and issue instructions to the Provincial Congress Committees and the subordinate bodies to do likewise. If we do this essential reform taking advantage of the new spirit that is born in the country after 1942, we shall be rendering a very excellent service to our organisation.

## THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

The 17-point Constructive Programme of Mahatma Gandhi is one of his greatest gifts to the nation. It is a mistake to imagine that this programme is intended to be merely ameliorative in its scope and substance. It is a dynamic programme specially designed by its architect for the reconstruction of the Indian nation on a very sound basis. Its potentialities are many and wonderful. Congressmen have been taught—and rightly so—to look upon this programme as ultimately leading to their national independence. There is not the smallest doubt that the Constructive Programme has had a tonic effect on the *morale* of congressmen who badly needed this energizing influence after what they had gone through during 1942 and after.

Gandhiji is a unique leader in respect of planning wonderful nation-building programmes, and then teach-

ing the nation how to implement them. They are his speciality. No other leader in the recorded history has given so much to his people by way of their moral and material advancement as he has done. His philosophy of *Satyagraha* knows no defeat and no frustration. He is ever ready with new plans and new programmes so that the nation may not stagnate. His leadership is continuous, unremitting and comprehensive. He would not leave out even a small detail if it has a potentiality of adding to the nation's strength. Like a clever physician he has always his hand on the pulse of the nation. He instinctively feels the nation's wants and surprisingly reacts to them. Congressmen must have noticed that every time he has come out of jail he has given us something new which would speedily recover the spirit of the nation. This, in my opinion, is the greatest attribute of his leadership. After the fearful repression of 1942 accompanied by leonine violence, the spirit of national India had gone down a bit for the time being. For a period of well-nigh two years there was no leadership and no guidance. People were feeling helpless having nothing to do and nobody to guide. It was in the midst of such depressing situation that Gandhiji was suddenly released from detention for reasons of health. It did not take him very long to regain his hold on the pulse of the nation. Within a few weeks of his release, he came out with his re-orientated Constructive Programme. He displayed uncommon resourcefulness and tact in pushing that programme in the country. Within a short time, the Programme miraculously rallied the scattered forces of the Congress under the National Flag. It is for the nation now to work on this programme and build, out of it, a dynamic energy for winning national freedom. The Working Committee of the

Congress must pay more attention to the Constructive Programme than it has done so far.

## VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

In our programme of reconstruction it is impossible to underestimate the importance of volunteer movement. A fighting organisation like the Indian National Congress needs a strong and well-disciplined volunteer organisation. I am afraid we have neglected this question in the past much to our cost. When we began our movement of mass action in 1920 we at once felt the need of a strong and well-trained volunteer organisation. All those thousands of young men and women who joined the movement at Gandhiji's call were, in a sense, volunteers. In the beginning we had no arrangements for training these volunteers for the various tasks which we entrusted to them. We had to hurriedly improvise camps all over the country for giving training to the bands of our young workers. The volunteer organisation thus came to stay and it has since the beginning of our movement been regarded an integral part of our struggle for Independence. At Cocanada Congress in 1923 we laid the foundation of a well-trained and well-disciplined volunteer organisation. The Hindustan Seva Dal was the first organised Corps of the Congress. Its branches were started all over the country and it produced thousands of energetic and well-trained volunteers. This Dal remained almost an official volunteer organisation of the Congress until 1930, the year of the first Civil Disobedience movement. The Dal used to be banned along with the Congress organisation and after 1934 when the second Civil Disobedience movement was withdrawn, it functioned no more. Since 1934 up to date, the Congress has had no centrally directed volunteer organisation of its own. No effort has been made by

the Working Committee of the Congress to give a lead to the nation in respect of this very essential activity of the Congress. No doubt the Congress organisation has suffered in the absence of such a lead. The Provincial Congress Committees have in some cases their own volunteer organisations but in the absence of a central directive there is neither uniformity nor sufficient vigour in their efforts. Whenever there are sessions of the Congress or the meetings of the All-India Congress Committee, the Provincial Congress Committees improvise some sort of volunteer organisations for the occasion. But this cannot be called a well-planned and well-directed volunteer movement which a fighting organisation like the Congress very badly needs. The Province of Bombay in this respect is ahead of others in that we have always had a powerful volunteer organisation in this City. Along with the men's organisation, we have built up a very powerful women's organisation and it has developed into an achievement of pride for this City. Under the very able and energetic leadership of Mrs. Safia Khan, the Congress Sevika Dal of this City has grown into a model which other Provinces may copy to their advantage.

In our scheme of re-organisation, the Congress must have a central policy regarding volunteer organisation. It is highly essential that the Congress Working Committee should draft a model constitution for the organisation of volunteers in every Province. It must give a definite lead in this direction to all Congress Committees in the country. We must choose bands of young men and women who should be given scientific training to make them ideal volunteers adequately fitted to carry out the responsibilities of their position. We must develop in these young men and women many physical and mental qualities which are necessary for an ideal citizenship. For



the Three-Year Programme we must fix progressive quotas of volunteers for every Province and every District. There is no reason why at the end of three years we should not have five lakhs of well-trained volunteers in the Congress. The magnitude of work that is before us does require this large number of volunteers. It is also necessary to raise the status of a volunteer in the society. The young men and young women must regard the volunteer's profession as an honourable duty for patriotic persons. Unless we demonstrate to the people that a volunteer is a most useful unit of national organisation and is also a potential leader of our national movement it will be difficult to draw smart and intelligent young men and women in our volunteer movement. Our programme of building up a strong volunteer organisation in the country needs scientific and elaborate planning. The volunteer's position in the Congress organisation must also be defined in a manner that leaves no scope for doubt or argument. What an army of regular soldiers means to a State, the army of our non-violent volunteers must mean to the Congress organisation. Our sanctions being moral we must inculcate greater and stricter discipline in our volunteers. A volunteer ought to be a voluntary servant of the people ever ready to help them in their difficulties. While he is a member of the organisation, he should not be an active partisan in any party or power politics. If he becomes such, he is bound to impair his usefulness to the organisation as a volunteer. We must also fight the danger of volunteers being exploited for any party or sectional purposes. That is not the role which the Congress should expect a volunteer to play. For the proper organisation of an all-India volunteer scheme, the Working Committee must appoint an able and influential Congress leader to be in charge of the volunteer activities

in the country. This officer must tour from Province to Province until the volunteer movement gain sufficient momentum. Rules must be made to regulate the training of volunteers, both physical and intellectual. A volunteer is to be made to realise that sometime in life he has also to play the role of a leader. He must therefore, try to acquire those attributes which make perfect leadership. A volunteer must be fearless and non-communal in his attitude. If the Congress succeeds in building such a strong and nation-wide volunteer movement it will, indeed, be a great boon to the country.

### OUR MAZDOORS

Industrial labour affords a vast field for activity. The Congress must do everything in its power to draw industrial labour into its fold. The workers in this country are becoming increasingly conscious of their importance in the political struggle. The *Mazdoor* movement has come to stay, and it is bound to materially influence our political affairs in future. Of course, the Congress has always stood for the rights of the poor and down-trodden masses. Our charter of fundamental rights adopted at Karachi has put a seal of approval on the rights of a common man. India is an agricultural country and about 80 per cent of our population is composed of those who live by labour, both industrial and agricultural. The labour, therefore, is the most important factor in our national struggle. Although in the past we have always tried to be on the right side of labour we have not so far made any country-wide systematic effort to rally industrial workers round the Flag of the Congress. We have often declared, and reiterated that declaration in the resolution of August 8, 1942, that the *Swaraj* which the Congress has in view is the *Swaraj* of and for the toiling masses of

this country. But a mere declaration is not enough. We have to implement this declaration by organising the workers on right lines. We have seen during the last twenty-five years that Congress is not the only institution interested in workers. There are other political organisations trying to push their way among workers for reasons of their own. The workers today are being systematically exploited for party and group politics in the name of various ideologies. I do not suggest that Congress should compete with others in this race for exploitation. We must banish all thoughts of exploitation from our minds when we make an approach to labour. We must so organise workers as to make it impossible for any one to exploit them. That means that the Congress must go to the labour with an ideology and a programme of work which would be acceptable to the labour in its own interests. The Congress has always believed in the value and importance of the Trade Union movement. Some of our top-most Congress leaders have been the Presidents of the All-India Trade Union Congress. They had the advantage of guiding and directing the Trade Union movement in this country. If the Trade Union movement was strong and in the hands of right type of people, there would have been little difficulty in getting its support for the movement of Independence. Unfortunately, neither is the Trade Union movement in this country strong nor is it in the hands of right type of people. This has created an anomalous position in our politics. There are more political parties in labour than outside and many of these are so openly and systematically exploiting the workers that the average worker gets confused and does not know when and how to act. The 1942 happenings have opened our eyes wide awake to this aspect of our struggle. Many of us had naturally thought that if a struggle was forced

on us, the industrial workers would stand by the Nation and play their part in this great movement of national liberation. In thinking on these lines we had obviously counted without the host. For many reasons into which we need not go at present, the workers could not play their expected part in this national awakening with the result that we had to suffer another temporary set-back. We have now realised the danger of leaving the labour movement into the hands of persons and parties whose loyalty to the Congress and the national cause is of a doubtful character. The Congress cannot escape the responsibility of giving a correct lead to labour. The Congress must, therefore, develop closest organisational contact with labour. We must so identify ourselves with the daily life and difficulties of a worker that he must feel spontaneously drawn towards us. We must carry on ceaseless propaganda among workers to bring home to them the central fact that their struggle for bread and the Congress struggle for independence were, in the last analysis, one and the same. The workers must be made to realise that they would not succeed in their fight for bread unless India succeeded in her fight for freedom. So also must the Congress recognise that the struggle for independence would never succeed unless the toiling masses of this country were a part of that struggle.

It is with this object of organising industrial workers on essentially Congress lines that the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh has been recently reorganised. The Sangh was there for the last few years operating in certain parts of the country but now it has made a bid for an all-India organisation of labour on Gandhian lines. We must welcome the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh and do all we can to support it by our action. The official labour policy of Congress in all the provinces must neces-

sarily follow the lines set by the Sangh. Thousands of students and other young workers must be trained for this gigantic task. To approach millions of workers and organise them in their respective trade unions is a huge task which would need great energy and large resources. There is enough scope for the talent and energy of our young men and women in this activity. In our scheme of reconstruction we must have a well-laid-out plan of pushing the work of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh among industrial workers all over the country. Gandhiji is the 'Guide, Friend and Philosopher' of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh. It was started at his instance and its recent reorientation has secured his blessings. In the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad we have got a model of labour organisation of which any nation could be proud. What Ahmedabad could do during the last 25 years in raising the status and strength of labour and creating the proper type of consciousness among workmen, surely, other cities and other Provinces can also do.

## OUR KISANS

The *Kisan* problem in India is by far the largest and the most difficult of our problems. The peasantry in this land is proverbially poor and perpetually in want. It is, besides, almost wholly illiterate. The Indian *Kisan* needs all the sympathy and support that the nation can give him. Right from 1920, the Congress has identified itself with the *Kisans* but we never formed any special organisation of *Kisans* on a separate class basis. Perhaps, this was not necessary then. But, I am sure, it is becoming increasingly necessary now. During the last few years *Kisan* organisations have cropped up in several parts of the country. Apart from the general problem of political slavery, the *Kisans* of India have a thousand and one pro-

blems of their own. These problems require special attention and sympathetic treatment. Like industrial workers, *Kisans* also are likely to be exploited by persons and parties not always friendly to the Congress. We must prevent this eventuality by all means at our disposal. Our *Swaraj* is mainly for the *Mazdoors* and *Kisans* of this country. The freedom for India, therefore, is not merely a political freedom, but it must also mean economic freedom of our *Kisans* and *Mazdoors* who form the bulk of our population. I regard it a very welcome sign that Congressmen in several Provinces have engaged themselves in forming *Kisan* organisations. In our new programme we must give a position of importance to the organisation of *Kisan* movement in this country. The "Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj" sounds a very happy slogan. We must add substance to it by our direct work among *Kisans*. It includes within its scope all the 40 crores of our masses. Our *Swaraj* is and ought to be a *Raj* of our *Kisans*, *Mazdoors*, and the *Praja*, which means the common people. Congress must formulate a scientific plan and programme of *Kisan* organisation. We must have a net-work of these organisations all over the country.

## OUR STUDENTS

When the history of the national happenings of 1942 comes to be authentically written, I am sure, the students of this country will find a place of honour in it. Their contribution in toil and blood to this mass movement was immense. The students of this country, right from the beginning of non-cooperation movement, have always identified themselves with the national struggle. In the early twenties several thousands of them joined the national movement and courted imprisonment. Somehow or other there was a lull in their activities for many years.

This might be 'due to want of proper leadership among them. The year 1942 has, however, demonstrated in no unmistakable terms what a brave and patriotic young generation can do for its country. In their thousands the students joined this movement and lit it up with the fire of their vigour and enthusiasm. Students everywhere in the world are an inflammable material. Once they rise to action, the potentialities of their strength are incalculable. It was, indeed, creditable to the student community of this country that without leadership and without proper guidance and without any previous experience they could do so much for their country. The nation may not have succeeded in getting what it wanted at the end of this great and spontaneous movement, but surely, it has succeeded beyond imagination in getting thousands of patriotic young men and women drawn into the national struggle, determined not to quit that struggle until the victory was theirs. This is by no means a small gain. During the last several months student organisations have sprung up in all parts of the land. They are doing wonderfully good work. They have plunged themselves into the activities of the Constructive Programme. The Provincial Organisations of students are federated into the all-India organisation known as the 'Indian Students' Congress'. This is a body thoroughly representative of the student mind of this country. The Congress must actively support the Indian Students' Congress.

This awakening among the students is a great national asset. We must, no doubt, capitalize this asset and put it to the best advantage of the country. The young students today are going to be the administrators of a free India tomorrow. Their potential role in the country's life is, therefore, extremely important. It is not enough that we get our freedom. We have also to carry on the ad-

ministration of a free India. 'We shall need thousands of young men and women of ability and character, for the efficient administration of this country when it is liberated from the foreign yoke. Surely we do not propose to import these administrators from England, America and even from Russia. We must prepare our own administrators and it is here that the organisation of students comes in. Hitherto the Congress has not paid any special attention to students as a class by themselves. As in other cases, this attitude of the Congress has resulted in leaving the students to the exploitation of men and parties who would have no truck with the Congress. The Congress cannot afford to be indifferent to the question of students' organisation any longer. The things have already started moving. The students have realised their responsibility in the struggle for independence. It is now for the Congress to guide them and direct their energies in a proper channel so that they may not walk into the arms of other political parties which are only too anxious to exploit them for their own purposes. Properly guided, students will help us in solving many of our problems. They are the raw material with which we have to build our edifice of *Swaraj*. They have the indomitable faith, vigour and energy—the qualities which are absolutely necessary for the success of our struggle for independence.

### ORGANISATION OF WOMEN

Indian women also have played a great part in the 1942 struggle. It has been a special feature of our national movement under Gandhiji's leadership that it has attracted a large number of women from the early beginning. No national movement of this dimension, anywhere in the world, has had so many active women participants as the *Satyagraha* movements of the Indian National Congress.



There are quite a number of organisations of women all over the country. They have been mostly nationalist and many of them even pro-Congress. In our programme of re-construction we must not under-estimate the importance of the organisation of women. Some of the items of our Constructive Programme can be more easily implemented by women than men. The Congress, therefore, must formulate a plan for the proper organisation of women in our scheme of re-construction.

### THE SHOP ASSISTANTS (GUMASTAS)

Side by side with industrial labour it is absolutely necessary to organise clerical labour known as the Shop Assistants or *Gumastas*. This labour is mostly confined to big industrial cities, and its numerical strength may go into several lakhs in the country. These are lower-middle class people whose sympathies have always been with the Congress. Class consciousness and political awakening are most definitely coming over this class of non-manual workers. As an organised section of the society the *Gumastas* can materially add to the organisational strength and the fighting capacity of the Congress. Of late years the Shop Assistants in several cities have been clamouring for their organisation. During the days of Congress Ministries their demand for recognition as a distinctive class to be protected by legislation, became so insistent that the Congress Government in Bombay had to pass an Act known as the Bombay Shops and Establishments Act of 1939. This Act immediately came into operation in several big cities of the Province of Bombay and it has been since functioning with wonderfully good results. The legal protection given by the Congress Government to this class is gratefully recognized. The clerical staff from many other cities in India is now clamouring for the protection

of its rights and interests and very soon this whole question will have to be tackled by the National Government on a national basis.

Congress cannot afford to neglect such a big section of the society as the *Gumastas*. They are already Congress-minded. They have made sacrifices for their freedom. We must organise them, of course, on the basis of trade-unionism and get the best out of them for our national struggle. They are ready to throw in their lot with the nation. Our scheme of re-organisation must, therefore, find place for the organisation of this important class.

## LIQUIDATION OF ILLITERACY

It is true that only a free state can effectively solve the question of the liquidation of its illiteracy. India's illiteracy is her greatest handicap and a drawback. It is a matter of shame for us that as many as four persons out of every five, i.e., 80 per cent of our population, are illiterate, not to talk of any education. This blot on our national reputation must be removed and sooner we did it the better it was in our national interest. Apart from many other causes, the main cause why our national movements fail to get the expected measure of success is the colossal illiteracy of our masses. The illiteracy among women is still worse. It is thrice as large as among men. How can a nation rise unless its masses also rise and what chance is there for the masses of this country to rise unless they first become literate? Statistics show that in the world's population of two hundred crores there are as many as hundred crore illiterates. Of these as many as thirty-two crores are our own brothers and sisters in our own land. That means that for every three illiterates in the world one is an Indian. That is not a very happy position for

our country. Congress cannot shut its eyes to this urgent national reform of liquidating mass illiteracy. We must have a systematic plan and programme about introducing this national reform. We cannot wait until after we have achieved our independence and formed our national state. In one or two Provinces of India and notably in the Province of Bombay, experiments of spreading literacy among adult masses especially in industrial cities are going on under the governmental supervision. It is a common experience in this country that anything that the Government may undertake to do has the least chance of becoming popular and it is, therefore, no wonder that Government's effort, meagre as it is, has not found any warm support among the masses. Unless the spirit of the masses is roused such reforms do not gather the speed that they must for their early accomplishment. It is for the Congress to create that spirit. This reform is, in my view, the most constructive of the whole Constructive Programme of Mahatma Gandhi. It is the foundation of all good things. I have no doubt that the nation will take to it with faith and determination.

In this connection the Mysore experiment as reported in the Press is most commendable. This Indian State has been the foremost in many social and educational reforms. In this reform also Mysore has surely lived up to its reputation. Even the literacy figures of this State are much higher than anywhere else in British India. The Mysore University, so goes the Press report, has made a rule that no student appearing for the Matriculation examination of the University will be declared as having passed that examination unless along with other requirements he produces a certificate of having made at least five illiterates literate. I am certain that when this rule comes into operation mass illiteracy will begin to disappear, at any rate.

in this State. According to another Press report in the same connection it is stated that the Mysore Government are contemplating a measure to drive away illiteracy by legislation. The measure as reported is: that after 5 years of the passing of the 'Compulsory Literacy Act' every illiterate adult in the State will be made to pay to the State an annual tax of Rs. 5 as a punishment for his illiteracy. During these 5 years the State will undertake to carry literacy to the very doors of the illiterate masses. This is also a very wonderful reform and the nation must congratulate the Mysore State for having undertaken it and thereby given the lead to the whole country.

## HARIJANS

Then there are other items of the Constructive Programme which must also find place in our scheme of national re-construction. The removal of untouchability is one of our oldest liability which has even to this day remained undischarged. We have not been able to liquidate it even after 25 years. Every congressman knows that Gandhiji's heart is set on this reform as on nothing else. A larger part of his waking hours every day is spent in the service of *Harijans*. During the last 25 years Gandhiji has done more for the solution of the *Harijan* problem than most people in the country for a hundred years. It is not merely the Congress but almost the whole nation is now convinced that untouchability is a scourge in this land and it must be wiped out at the earliest possible moment. Congressmen must actively take up this programme and accelerate its speed by concentrated effort. It is possible to formulate a scientific plan in this connection for the daily practice of the rank and file of congressmen.

In spite of unremitting efforts of Mahatma Gandhi our 'Rashtrabhasha,' the *lingua franca* of India, in its double garb, namely, 'Devnagari' and 'Urdu' has not made as great a headway as it should have. The nation is now getting impatient about its freedom. We have to hurry up with every activity which is intended to help our freedom movement. The spread of 'Rashtrabhasha' is undoubtedly such an activity, and the Congress can no longer be indifferent about it. Hitherto the activities like the removal of untouchability, spread of Khaddar, Prohibition, use of the products of village industries and even spread of *Rashtrabhasha* were regarded as special subjects for Gandhiji's care and concern. Beyond passing resolutions at frequent intervals in support of these, the Congress has done very little in regard to these items of the Constructive Programme. This attitude on the part of the Congress is neither fair to Gandhiji nor is it a sound national policy. The Congress must immediately take up these subjects in hand and formulate a plan and programme for immediate execution. It has now been established beyond doubt or argument that Congress cannot live and grow merely on political agitation. The freedom which is secured by political agitation alone is merely a shadow that may look like freedom but surely it can never have the substance of freedom. The freedom would naturally be judged by its contents and the more real and substantial these contents are, the more lasting will that freedom be. The Congress must create and build up the contents of Indian freedom. And this cannot be done without implementing, in the fullest measure, the Constructive Programme given to the nation by Mahatma Gandhi.

## PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES

The attitude of 'superiority complex' in regard to Parliamentary activities is definitely going out of fashion in this country. People have realised, as they must, that sooner or later they will have to carry on the Government of this country. The qualities of good administration are, therefore, as necessary a part of our national equipment as the qualities of fighting in our struggle for independence. There used to be a time when the majority of congressmen used to scoff at the very mention of Parliamentary activities. The Congress has very often boycotted elections to legislatures and institutions of Local Self-Government. Those were different times. They have gone for ever. Both the Congress and the nation have made tremendous political advancement in all these years and we are now on the threshold of having to undertake the entire administration of our country. The Parliamentary activities, therefore, have become as important and integral a part of our total national effort as the revolutionary activities of the past. Hitherto we were sending only second-rate and third-rate people to legislatures, municipalities, local boards and other bodies. These people did more harm than good and very often brought Congress into ridicule. This cannot go on any longer. The Congress must now send its best team to capture these administrative positions. It was a welcome sign at the Simla Conference that the list submitted on behalf of the Congress for forming the National Cabinet did include the top-most Congress leaders whose presence in any national cabinet would have brought astonishingly good results. The spirit that was shown at Simla must now govern our attitude towards the Parliamentary activities. The best fighters who are also capable men must be sent to Central and Provincial Assemblies and the important

city municipalities in India. These institutions can be made to supplement the national programme of the Congress. The 'touch-me-not' policy of the Congress in regard to the Parliamentary activities must go once for all. If we congressmen are made of the right kind of stuff we can demonstrate to our own people and also to the world that we can discharge our obligations ably and honourably, in whatever positions we are made to work for the nation. The Congress must, therefore, formulate a programme of Parliamentary activities and prosecute it with ability and vigour.

## COMMUNAL AND POLITICAL PARTIES

In formulating our programme of reconstruction we must finally settle our policy in regard to our relationship with the communal and the political parties in this country. There has been too much of wobbling in recent years on this question. The policy of pleasing everybody has never succeeded anywhere at any time. We must be able to distinguish between a friend and a foe. Too much pampering of a person or a party can hardly do us any good. The experience has shown that it has done us a lot of harm. Our policies are generally misunderstood by the masses. The Congress must take its stand firmly and unequivocally on a national programme regardless of consequences. If the resolutions of the Congress Working Committee at Poona are any indication of our future policy, the nation can heave a sigh of relief that at last the policy of appeasement is at an end.

## CONGRESS PUBLICITY

There is one subject which requires special emphasis in our scheme of reconstruction and that is, the adequate publicity of the policy and the programme of the Indian

National Congress. The Indian Press—and to a certain extent even the Foreign Press—have been very friendly to us throughout our struggle for independence. There is much however, which the Congress as an institution can do to organise better and more widespread publicity for many of its activities. Such an attempt has never been made in the past. A time has now come when the Congress must give serious thought to the question of publicity and information. There ought to be, in my opinion, a member of the High Command in charge of Information and Publicity. It should be his responsibility to so organise and regulate publicity as to get best results out of it. The Congress can make a systematic plan for it and vigorously put it into action. The science of publicity is a technical science. It is very much advanced in the modern world. We must train thousands of our young men and women in the art of proper publicity. There must be a training class at the centre, where most expert training in the art of publicity can be made available to some of our smart young men and women having journalistic talents. Even the Provincial Congress Committees should start their own training classes. We must build up and develop our friendly contacts with the newspaper world. Many of the newspapers in this country are Congress-minded. They will surely help us in organising our national publicity. The Working Committee must officially run a 'National Bureau of Information and Publicity,' preferably in the City of Bombay.

### TOTAL APPROACH

The central theme of all suggestions made in the foregoing pages is that hereafter the Indian National Congress must infuse lot of constructive energy and young blood in all its activities. Not a single element of the nation



ought to remain out of our organisational contact. The Congress must contact the nation in its entirety. In the scheme of national re-construction our approach to the nation must be a total approach. It must be recognised that unless every section, whether small or big, is made to get on its legs and act, the nation cannot rise. This is the meaning of the total approach. The Congress has always meant such a total approach although it had never any opportunity of planning it systematically and scientifically. A time has now come for us to start this effort in a vigorous and determined manner. There is a lot of excellent material in the country waiting to be harnessed for the cause of country's freedom. The Congress will be committing the mistake of the greatest magnitude if it fails on this crucial occasion to make use of this material. We must go to the younger generation of the country and try to train it from now for the future leadership of our nation. It is out of the young men and women of this generation that the future leadership of the country is to be drawn. This leadership must have fighting qualities as well as the administrative abilities to run the administration of free India. We must not, therefore, allow our young generation to go untrained and uncared for in our scheme of things. The same rule applies to the *Mazdoors*, *Kisans* and other important national sections. Now is the time for an all-out effort on a national basis to strengthen the Congress and make it the most gigantic as also the most popular people's organisation in the country. Such a Congress alone will win the freedom of this country in the shortest possible time.

V A N D E M A T A R A M

## PREFACE

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THIS book has been specially designed as a help to the students of the B.A. classes and High School teachers, who have had no opportunity, time or access to go through the original sources. The book is also intended to bridge the gap between text-books and original sources.

Moreover, a knowledge of chief national events in all their bearings, promotes a national pride, which does not stop short of national freedom; and this book is but a step to that knowledge.

Here, I take the opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to the various authors, from whom I had taken copious quotations in general and specially to Fr. Heras, for quotations from his "Aravidu Dynasty".

To Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastriar, I am indebted in more ways than one. His book on the "Colas" instilled in me a desire to write and also set me upon the theme of this book, the 'Famous Battles in Indian History'; his approval enabled this book

to see the light of the day; his lectures and personal suggestions gave the finishing touches to this book. And I once more gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to him.

My friend, Sri V. Doraiswami, has laid me under a deep debt of obligation to him, by introducing me to the publishers, by going through the manuscript and correcting the proofs for me. My thanks are due to him for the interest he evinced in seeing this book through the press.

Lastly, my thanks are due to the publishers, Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, and specially to Rao Bahadur G. A. Natesan for readily undertaking to publish the book in these difficult times and also for the nice printing and get-up of the book.

AUTHOR

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

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**U**NDER the title "FAMOUS BATTLES IN INDIAN HISTORY", the writer has brought together vivid and detailed accounts of ten decisive engagements that made a difference in the fortunes of dynasties and peoples in this country. The Battle of the Hydaspes, with which the book opens, is an epochal event in the ancient history of India, as it was fought to prevent the onrush of the Greeks under Alexander by the valiant Pòrus, King of the Pauravas. Each of the successive battles described in these pages marks a turning point in the history of India, in the North as well as in the South. The Battle of Venni marks the beginning of the connected history of South India as the Battle of Vellur completes the story of the conquest and annexation of the Pandyan territory by the Cholas. The Arab conquest of Sind, the Turkish conquest of Afghanistan, the Afghan conquest of Northern India, the Moghul conquest of India by the First Battle of Panipat, the

downfall of the Hindu Imperial Rajput power after the Battle of Kanwa, and the Battle of Talikota which sealed the fate of Vijayanagar and paved the way for Muslim expansion into Southern India are all events of momentous significance in the pageant of Indian History. Text-books on the subject, brief and meagre, in their matter of fact presentation, can hardly satisfy the natural curiosity of the reader to obtain more thorough knowledge of these important episodes in Indian History; while more ponderous treatises embodying the researches of scholars are far too erudite for laymen's taste. This unpretentious book is a *via media* between the too brief text-book and too scholarly tome for the historian, and as such, it is hoped, will serve a useful purpose, alike to the student and the lay reader.

The Publishers' thanks are due to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastriar for valuable suggestions and help in getting the book through the press.

G. A. NATESAN & CO.

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# FAMOUS BATTLES IN INDIAN HISTORY

## I

### THE BATTLE OF HYDASPES

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**T**HE battle of Hydaspes, ever memorable as an epoch-making event in the history of Ancient India, was fought to prevent the onrush of the Greeks under Alexander into India, by the valiant Porus, king of the Pauravas, in July 326 B.C.

The Hydaspes, now known as the Jhelum, is one of the five rivers of the Punjab. The Sanskrit name for this river is *Vitasta*, which means 'widespread'. The natives of Kashmir call this river *Bidesta*, which is but a slightly altered form of the Sanskrit name *Vitasta*. Ptolemy, in his geography, calls this river *Bidaspes*, a form nearer the original than *Hydaspes*. The river is mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. This river, along with four others, the Cheenab, the Ravi, the Beas



and the Satlej, forms the Panjanad of the Panjab. The five rivers flowing side by side are referred to as Panjanad, and uniting together as a single river, they meet the Indus at Mithankot, about 490 miles from the sea. The Hydaspes is separated from the Indus by a stretch of 160 miles.

At the time of Alexander's invasion, the land between the Indus and Hydaspes, i.e., the present Sind-Sagar Doab, was occupied by the powerful tribes, the Taxilas and the Abhisaras. Between the Indus and the Hydaspes was Taxila, a large city governed by good laws, writes Strabo. The kingdom of Taxila formed the eastern part of the old kingdom of Gandhara. It was situated on a level where the hills sank into the plains and the soil was extremely fertile from the number of springs and water courses. Taxila, which in Ptolemy's geography appears as Taxila, represents either the Sanskrit 'Taksha-Sila', i.e., hewn stone, or more probably 'Takshaka-Sila', i.e., the rock of Taksha, the great Naga King. Cunningham identifies the ruins of a

fortified city scattered over a wide space near the rock-seated village Shah-Deri, Punjab, as Taxila. The ruins lie about eight miles south-east of Hassan Abdal and thirty miles west from the famous tope Manikyala and twenty-four miles north-west of Rawalpindi. In B.C. 327, the ruler of this kingdom was known as Taxilas. He was succeeded by his son Ambhi, the Omphis of the Greek writers. Ambhi was afraid of his powerful neighbours, the Pauravas and the Abhisaras.

The kingdom of the Abhisaras, a powerful tribe, lay among the mountains above the Taxila country. At the time of Alexander's invasion, the Abhisaras, allying themselves with the Pauravas, threatened the very existence of the kingdom of Taxila. It was the fear of these two tribes that drove Ambhi of Taxila to seek the protection of Alexander. When Alexander, camping at Kabul, demanded submission, Ambhi readily obeyed the summons and allied himself with the invader. As Rapson observes, 'It was the hand of an Indian prince which unbarred the door to the invader'. Ambhi

met Alexander at Ohind, sixteen miles above Attock and invited him to his capital.

Alexander, king of Macedon, surnamed the Great, was born at Pella, in the year 356 B.C. and his father was Philip II. of Macedon, whose fame in Greek history is second only to that of his son. His mother Olympia belonged to the royal race of Eperes, which claimed descent from Achilles, the Greek hero of the *Iliad*. Alexander was trained by Leonidas, his mother's kinsman, on the lines of Spartan discipline—hard exercise and simple fare. He next came under the influence of Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher. He had his military training under his father, Philip, who had then become famous throughout the Greek world. Alexander, under the able tutelage of his father, became a master of military technique, and in the battle of Chaeronea, won for himself a position and name for bravery.

On the assassination of his father, Alexander ascended the throne of Macedon. At the time of his accession, he was

21 years of age and was beset with many difficulties. He, however, soon overcame them by his courage and firmness, and made himself master of Macedon and the army. His success in quelling his opponents fired his ambition for a career of conquest. He accordingly made preparations for his glorious and successful march into the kingdom of Persia.

Fully equipped, Alexander started from his native city, leaving his uncle Antipater, as his regent in the capital. Marching into Persia, he defeated Darius, the last Persian monarch of his dynasty, and having annexed his country, led his troops into India.

'India had been a part of the empire of Darius, and Alexander's invasion was only the necessary and inevitable completion of his conquest of that empire'. In the course of his march, Alexander met at Bactria, a chief of Gandhara, Sasi Gupta by name, and was by him assured of the aid of Taxila, who was being sore pressed by his powerful neighbour, Poros. Later, arriving at Kabul Alexander summoned the king of Taxila to do him homage.

The Indian king met Alexander and saw the army at Kabul arrayed to invade India and estimated it at 25,000 to 35,000. Alexander, assured of help, divided his army, sent one division in advance with orders to march to the Indus and with the other marched against the mountain tribes around the Kabul valley. Later, marching into India, he met his other division near the Indus and crossed the river at Ohind, sixteen miles above Attock. Then leading his army away from the Indus, he arrived at Taxila, 'a great and flourishing city, the greatest indeed of all the cities, which lay between the Indus and the Hydaspes.' Taxila, as Alexander found it, was very populous and possessed of incredible wealth. He was given the usual royal greetings by the king of Taxila and Alexander stayed at the city for a few days.

From Taxila Alexander sent messengers to Porus demanding submission. The land between the Jhelum and the Cheenab, the present Jech-Doab, formed the kingdom of Porus and his tribe, the Pauravas. According to Strabo, the

kingdom of the elder Porus 'was an extensive fertile district containing nearly 8,000 cities'. Didorus informs us that Porus had an army of more than 50,000 foot, about 8,000 horses, 1,000 chariots and 180 elephants. News was brought to Porus by his spies that Ambhi had allied himself with the invader and was planning to march against his kingdom. Porus, undaunted, prepared to meet the invader, strengthened his army and sent his son to guard the passages of the rivers and prevent a successful crossing of the river by the invading army. Hearing of the preparations made by the king of Pauravas to check him, Alexander left a garrison at Taxila, and immediately marched towards Hydaspes, with the determination to subjugate Porus. However before taking any hostile action, he sent an envoy named Cleochares to Porus demanding submission and tribute in person at the frontier of his kingdom. To this Porus gave the proud answer that he would indeed go to him, not as a suppliant, but at the head of an army ready for the fight. 'No other Indian king except

Porus came to the frontier to repel the foreign foe; and to the eternal glory of this valiant monarch, be it recorded that he with two sons and an army 50,000 strong gallantly stood to oppose the mightiest and the greatest hero of antiquity'.

News came to Alexander that Porus with the whole of his army was on the other side of the river, resolved either to prevent him from making the passage or to attack him when crossing. Upon learning this, Alexander sent back Koinos to the river Indus with orders to cut to pieces all the boats that had been constructed and made to float on the river Hydaspes, which was then in floods.

The site of Alexander's camp on the Hydaspes until he effected his passage, is, according to some, Jhelum and according to others, Jalalpur. Smith opines it to be Jhelum, while Cunningham, and later Stein, argue for Jalalpur. Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri\* accepting the contentions of Breloer, a German author, says that

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\* Madras University Lectures, 1942.

it has been conclusively proved beyond doubt that the place wherefrom Alexander took off was Jhelum, not Jalalpur.

'Alexander in his Indian expedition advanced to the Hydaspes with intention to cross it, when Porus appeared with his army on the other side, determined to dispute the passage. Alexander then marched towards the head of the river and attempted to cross it there. Thither also Porus marched, and drew up his army on the opposite side. He then made the same effort lower down; there too Porus opposed him. These frequent appearances of intention to cross it, without ever making a real attempt to effect it, the Indians ridiculed, and concluding that he had no real design to pass the river, they became more negligent in attending to his movements, when Alexander by a rapid march, gaining the banks, effected his purpose on barges, boats and hides stuffed with straw, before the enemy had time to come up with him, who, deceived by so many faint attempts, yielded him at last an uninterrupted passage. (Shepherd's translation



fell little short of 20,000 infantry, 3,000 cavalry and all their chariots were broken to pieces.

'When Porus, who had nobly discharged his duties throughout the battle, performing the part not only as a general but also as a gallant soldier, saw the slaughter of his cavalry and some of his elephants lying dead and others wandering about sad and sullen without their drivers, while the greatest part of his infantry had been killed, he did not, after the manner of Darius, the Great king, abandon the field and show his men the first example of a flight, but on the contrary fought as long as he saw Indians maintaining the contest in a united body . . . . but when he found himself wounded, he turned his elephant and began to retire. Alexander perceiving that he was a great man and valiant in fight, was anxious to save his life, and for this purpose sent to him first of all, Taxiles the Indian. Taxiles, who was on horseback, approached as near the elephant which carried Porus, as seemed safe, and entreated him, since it was no longer possible for him to flee,

to stop his elephant and listen to the message he brought from Alexander. But Porus, on finding that the speaker was his old enemy Taxiles, turned round and prepared to smite him with his javelin; and he would have probably killed him, had not Taxiles, instantly put his horse to the gallop and got beyond the reach of Porus. But not even for this act did Alexander feel any resentment against Porus, but sent him messenger after messenger and last of all Meroes, an Indian, as he had learned that Porus and this Meroes were old friends. As soon as Porus heard the message which Meroes had brought just at a time when he was overpowered by thirst, he made his elephant halt, and dismounted. Then when he had taken a draught of water, he felt relieved, he requested Meroes to conduct him without delay to Alexander. (McCrindle).

Alexander stepped in front of his line on horseback and beheld with admiration the handsome person and majestic stature of Porus, which somewhat exceeded five cubits. He saw too with wonder, that

he did not seem to be broken and abased in spirit, but that he advanced to meet him as one brave man would meet another brave man after gallantly contending with another king in the defence of his kingdom. Then Alexander, who was the first to speak, requested Porus to say how he wished to be treated. Report goes that Porus said in reply 'Treat me, O! Alexander! as befits a king', and that Alexander being pleased with his answer replied, 'For mine own sake, O! Porus! thou shalt be so treated, but do thou, in thine own behalf, ask for whatever boon thou pleasest'. To which Porus replied, that in what he had asked, everything was included. Alexander, was more delighted than ever with this rejoinder, and not only appointed Porus to govern his own country, but added to his original territory another of still greater extent. Such then was the result of the battle in which Alexander fought against Porus and the Indians of the other side of the Hydaspes (McCrindle, p.108-110).

A city of victory was built on the site of the battle, while yet another was

planted on the opposite banks in memory of the famous Bucephalus, the king's stalwart old horse.

Arrian says 'Indian bows though powerful were useless against the mobile Greek cavalry'.

The Indian method of using a bow had a technique of its own. One end of the long bow had to rest on the ground, pressed by a toe before the bowman could discharge the arrow from it. This technique required a hard ground. Moreover though the bows were deadly in their action, yet it took time for manipulation. Hence is Arrian's statement "The Indian bows, though deadly, were no match against mobile Greek cavalry". It was rainy season, the ground was soft and miry and Porus' bowmen were unable to use their bows to good effect. This was one of the causes for the defeat of Porus.

In olden times the Indian kings rightly placed much reliance upon their elephants to crush their enemies, in the manner of modern tanks. But Porus' elephants got stuck into the miry ground and were unable to execute sharp movements. That

the Greeks and their horses grew afraid of the big elephants has often been stressed by Arrian. If the rains had not set in, and prevented the elephants from working havoc on the enemy's cavalry and footmen, the end of the battle would have been different, and Indian history would have had to tell quite a different tale. At any rate, Porus could have really defended himself and his kingdom and preserved his independence.

It can be safely asserted here that it was the fear engendered by the elephants in general on the minds of the Greeks and the spread of a similar idea of terror in the countries bordering India, that was responsible for the comparative absence of any foreign aggression into India for nearly ten centuries after Alexander.

Moreover, Porus was not helped by any other chief and he had to fight single-handed. The flank attack made by Alexander's cavalry was quite unexpected by the Indian king. Thus was the Indian king, Porus, vanquished, though personally he was more than a match to Alexander.

With the *descent* of Alexander the Great into the Punjab a new period may be said to have commenced. 'His Indian expedition was the first occasion for close conscious contact between the two countries; the conqueror, it is true, subdued no more than a mere corner of India and that only for a time, but that Hellenic culture to the diffusion of which Alexander devoted his attention, as great as that bestowed by him on his material conquest, long survived his transitory empire in Asia and even in India made its presence felt in many different directions. . . . Not only a few motifs of Hindu architecture and sculpture and carving and such like arts adhered too closely at their commencement to the Grecian models but Astronomy too—at least its scientific phase—was based somewhat on Grecian works; by which a great many Greek expressions have found their way into Indian astronomy'.

To exaggerate the Hellenistic influence of Alexander's invasion has been the tendency of a great many European scholars, while to minimise the influence

of Greek art on India and to repudiate with vigour the suggestion that Indian art owed anything to the West has been of late the rule with some of our own historians. 'The vigorous rule of the Mauryan monarchs, which saw the beginning of a great Indian renaissance, was indirectly the result of Alexander's invasion', writes Mr. Sen in his book, *Hellenism in Ancient India*. To say that the vigorous rule of the Mauryan administration was the outcome of Alexander's invasion, however indirectly, is to repudiate the capacity of the Mauryan monarchs. The Mauryan monarchs just then wresting power from the Nandas, had to be vigorous and powerful in their policy and administration in their own interest. On the other hand, it was the vigorous Mauryan rule that led to a close and conscious contact between the two cultures, for the Mauryan monarch Chandragupta, not only conquered Seleukos Nikator, the great Viceroy, but married his daughter and allowed Megasthenes, the ambassador of Seleukos to reside in his court.

It can be asserted that one marked effect of the invasion was the rise of a strong monarchy, with imperial ideas in India in the place of small republican States. The easy subjugation of the small States by Alexander led to the realisation of the need for a strong monarch in the country and this indirectly helped the rise of the Mauryan power and empire.

"Though his (Alexander's) direct influence vanished from India within a generation, and her literature does not know him, he affected Indian History for centuries: for Chandragupta saw him and deduced the possibility of realising in actual fact, the conception handed down from Vedic times, of a comprehensive monarchy in India; hence Alexander indirectly created Asoka's empire and enabled the spread of Buddhism". (Cambridge, Ancient History of India.)

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## II THE BATTLE OF VENNI

OR

### THE RISE OF THE CHOLAS

THE battle of Venni marks the beginning of a connected history of South India, and its importance can hardly be over-estimated. The traditional account of the Cholas begins with the battle of Venni, between Karikala Chola and the Chera and Pandyan kings.

The beginnings of the history of South India or more aptly the Tamil-Akam, lie still enveloped in a mist and historians have to fall back upon the Tamil literature of the Sangam age for a reconstruction of South Indian history. "The Sangam literature is the oldest native source that supplies relevant material for the construction of a reliable account of the times and is now freely acknowledged to be an indispensable, and in some cases, the only, source of historical information, in regard to early Tamil kingdoms." (*The Cera kings:*

(by K. G. Sesha Iyer.) The Sangam literature is classified under two broad divisions based on the subject-matter of the poems. Certain collections of lyrics relate to Puram, the Parapporai, concerned with the external relations of men such as war and politics. Certain other collections deal purely with Akam, embracing matters relating to states of mind, particularly of lovers.

The Sangam collections form the only source of information for the battle of Venni. Puram 65 and 66 of the Sangam collections, known as Purananam, give us an account of the victory of Karikala Chola over the Cheras and the Pandyas at Venni. Akam 55 also gives an account of the battle. Porunaratruppadai-I, 148-149 and Agam 246 also give us an account of the battle. Venni is identified with the modern village of Koilvenni, 15 miles to the east of Tanjore. No definite date can be assigned to the battle, but it cannot be gainsaid that it was one of the earliest and most decisive battles of India.

Karikala Chola who was the victor, was the earliest Chola ruler known to tradition. He is called "Valavan" in Tamil literature

and is said to have established the Chola power in South India. "The name Chola is given to a people as well as to a dynasty of rulers. The Cholas, as rulers, find mention in the second and thirteenth rock edicts of Asoka. Further references to the Cholas are also found in foreign literature such as *Periplus Maris Erythrae*, and Ptolemy's geography, etc. The land between the two modern streams of the same name Vellar, formed the first Chola territory. The Cholas had their capital at Uraiyur, with Puhar or Kaveripattinam, as their alternative capital and chief sea-port." A tangible historical account of the Cholas is to be had only from the Sangam age and its literature. Karikala Chola, the victor at Venni, is said to have established and developed Puhar as the chief port; Puhar was the great emporium of the East. Karikala Chola's grandfather's name appears to be *Verpaharadakkai Perunarkilli*, and his father's name was *Uruvapparar Ilaiyon* or *Ilanjet Chenni*. His father seems to have died at an early age and it is inferred that Karikala succeeded.

his grandfather as a boy. "Karikala Chola was ably assisted by his uncle Pidairthalayan and he contracted a marriage alliance with the Nangur Vel family." (Dr. S. K. Iyengar—Ancient India—p. 93.) "Karikala Chola was a remarkable sovereign, who in many ways contributed to the permanent welfare of his subjects and has consequently been handed down to posterity as a beneficent monarch."

For a clear understanding of the significance of the battle of Venni, a knowledge of the Pandyas and the Cheras is essential. "South of the Chola kingdom lay that of the Pandyas which extended from coast to coast, and embraced within its borders the modern districts of Madura and Tinnevely and the State of Travancore, taking also a part of Coimbatore and Cochin." (Ancient India; -61). The existence of the Pandya kingdom and the dynasty can be traced back to several centuries before the Christian era, as they are noticed in the Asokan inscriptions and the Mahawanso. The Pandyas had Madura as their capital and Korkai as their chief sea-port and the seat of a

vicerealty. The emblem of their house was the fish. The name of the Pandya King who sustained a defeat at the hands of Karikala Chola at the battle of Venni is not definitely known at present.

"North of the Pandyan kingdom lay the territory of the Cheras", a territory stretching right across the Palghat gap through Salem and Coimbatore. The Cheras had their capital at Vanji and their primary port was Thondi. All these three kingdoms, i.e., the Chera, the Chola and the Pandyan kingdoms, comprised the Tamil *Akam* of the Sangam age and the literature of this period mostly deals with the vicissitudes of these three dynasties.

The battle of Venni marks a turning point in Karikala Chola's career, "for in this battle, he seems to have broken the back of a widespread confederacy formed against him. Besides the two crowned heads of the Chera and Pandya countries, eleven minor chieftains took their side in the campaign against him and shared the defeat at his hands."—(The Cholas by Prof. K. A. N. Sastriar.) The name of the Chera King, Cheraman Perum

Cheralatan is mentioned in the colophon of the poem and a footnote gives another reading of the name as Perum Tolatan. Mr. K. G. Sesha Aiyar-(Chera Kings) identifies Adu Kodpattu Cheralattan, as the Chera King.

The battle of Venni established Karikala Chola firmly on the throne and secured for him some sort of hegemony among the three crowned monarchs of the day. After his victory Karikala seems to have cemented an alliance with the Chera King, by giving one of his daughters in marriage to the son of his vanquished rival. The name of the Chola princess is mentioned in Silappadikaram as Nachchovai.

The battle of Venni is of special interest, as Puram 65 and 66 mention a peculiar practice among famous warriors in those early days. "We are told that the Chera King, while facing the foe in the battle, was pierced by a shaft which ran through his body, wounding also his back; and as a wound in the back was regarded as a blot on heroism the Chera sat facing north and courted death by starvation. Starvation unto death as a

penance has always been regarded in India, especially in ancient times, as an act of supreme fortitude and merit, and by this act the Chera wiped out the humiliation that the wound in the back implied. Akam 55 shows that the act evoked the sympathy and admiration of several, who also gave their lives along with him; and brilliant as his victory was, Karikala Chola seems to have felt that the heroism of the vanquished Chera's self-immolation surpassed his own as the victor of the day, and he had to be consoled with the assurance that the Chera King was not greater than he in glory." (The Chera Kings by K. G. Sessa Iyer.)

The bard Kalath-thalaiyar, who was with the Chera army at the engagement, mourns over the defeat of his king, and describes the gloom of his subjects, in the following verse (puram 65). "The drum no longer thunders. The lute has no music. The large milk-pans now lie empty. Nor is honey gathered by the busy bees. No longer the farmers plough their fields. No more is there any festive-gatherings on the village lawns. Like the-

sun who sets behind the hills, when the fullmoon rises in all its splendour, our valiant king wounded on the back by a rival monarch, has laid aside his sword in disgrace (and seeks death by starvation) alas! How sad and cheerless are these days."

Another bard Vennil-Kuyathiyar who was with the Chola King appears to have been also struck with the unlucky fate of the Chera and addressed Karikala as follows: "Oh! descendant of that warrior who sailing on the wide ocean compelled the winds to fill the sails of his ships. Oh! Karikal Valava! Lord of mighty elephants who hast displayed thy valour in this battle. Is not he, even nobler than thee, who ashamed of the wound on his back, starves without food, to gain a glorious death?"\*

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\* "Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago" by V. Kanakasabhai, p. 66-67.



### III

## THE BATTLE OF SRIPURAMBIYAM

**L**IKE the battle of Venni, the battle of Sripurambiyam is yet another landmark in the history of South India. Sripurambiyam, also known as Tirupurambiyam, is a place close to Kumbakonam. The Udayendiram plates furnish us with the information about this battle. These plates were issued in the 15th year (A.D. 921) of Madurai Konda Parakesarivarman Parantaka I. by Prithvipathi II. of the Ganga dynasty, also known as the Hastimalla. The plates state that Prithvipathi I, the ally of the Pallava King Aparajita, defeated the Pandya King Varaguna and lost his life in the course of that fight, having made his friend's title Aparajita significant. Thus it is evident that a battle took place between Varaguna Pandya on the one side and Ganga Prithivipathi and his over-lord on the other. Scholars fix the date of the battle somewhere about 880 A.D., which agrees with the facts so far known.

This battle marks the beginning of the decline of the Pandyas and also the revival of the Chola power, which had hitherto been kept under the control of the Pallavas of Kanchi. The significance of the battle is best understood by a study of the position of the Pandyas, the Gangas and the Pallavas, at the time of the battle.

At the time of the battle of Sripurambiyam, Varaguna Pandya, also known as Maranjadayan was ruling over Madura. His date of accession to the throne has definitely been fixed up by scholars to be 862-63 A.D. We find in the Tamil literature mention of his aggressive rule and the spirit of his aggression is evidenced by an inscription of his reign found in the upper caves of Trichinopoly, in the Chola country.

"At this time the enterprising chieftains, known to history as Muttaraiyars, were in possession of a part of the fertile delta-land in Tanjore; their inscriptions at Sendalai clearly describe them as ruling Tanjore also". (Prof. K. A. N. Sastriar—The Cholas.) In Varaguna Pandya's time-

these chieftains threw in their lot with the Pandyas and consequently their neighbours, the Cholas, under Vijayalaya threw in their lot with the Pallavas. The Pallava with his help emboldened the Chola monarch to march against the Tanjore Chiefs, captured Tanjore from the Muttariyar chieftains and annexed it to his dominions. And the Pallava little suspected that, "in employing his Chola subordinates he was, as the Indian saying has it, training the tiger cub to a taste of blood". (*Ibid.*) Nor did Vijayalaya dream that his victory would sow the seed of one of the most splendid empires known to Indian history.

Varaguna Pandya of Madura little expected his subordinates the Muttaraiyars to be defeated by the Chola. And when he heard of the capture of Tanjore by Vijayalaya he led an expedition into the Chola country with the avowed object to chastise the Chola monarch and incidentally to extend his power and dominion. Varaguna attacked Idavai, stormed the fortress of Vembil, the modern Vembarur on the river Kaveri successfully. He then

seems to have advanced beyond the Chola country and occupied a portion of Tondainadu, for, we have a grant issued by him from his camp at Araisur, on the river Pennar, in Tondainadu. His advance into Tondainadu brought him into conflict with the Gangas and their over-lords, the Pallavas, mistakenly called by some scholars Ganga-Pallavas, and considered as a separate dynasty.

"The Pallavas began as officers of the Satavahanas and ultimately rose to undisputed possession of the territory of Kanchi, the right to which they strengthened by an alliance with the heiress of the southern block of the Satavahana territory, thus in a way becoming the titular descendants of the Satavahanas over the whole of the southern regions of Satavahana territory including in it their own new conquests, the territory of Tondaimandalam, dependent upon Kanchi". (The Pallavas by S. Gopalan, Introduction—p. 16.) In the course of their occupation of Kanchi and its surrounding districts, the Pallavas seem to have driven further south, a tribe known to history as Kalwar or Kalawar, who in their turn brought about the disorder in

the territory lying immediately to the south of the Nellore district extending southwards to the banks of Kaveri. It is this disturbance that is called the Kalabhra inter-regnum in South Indian history. The Pandyas and the Pallavas soon put an end to the disturbances and in the act extended their power and position while the Cholas seem to have succumbed to it. The Pallavas taking advantage of the Kalabhra disturbances brought the Cholas in the south under their subjection and so came into conflict with the Pandyas, who also attempted to extend their territory at the expense of the Cholas.

In the north the Gangas and the Kalambas accepted the Pallava over-lordship which in turn brought the Pallavas into conflict with the Chalukyas, who claimed supremacy over the Gangas. The constant hostilities of the Chalukyas on the northern frontier and the activity of the Pandyas in the south made the position of the Pallavas in the middle, one of extreme anxiety. "The maintenance of the Pallava power intact meant a 'Janus-faced' fight, south against the Pandyas and north

against the Chalukyas." (The Pallavas—Introduction, p. 29.)

Thus it was in the later years the Pallavas, though nominally rulers over an extensive land, were really not powerful enough to check the dismemberment of their empire. Hence it was, the Pallavas allied themselves with their subordinates, the western Gangas who in turn, were compelled to continue their alliance because of the Chalukyan aggression on the northern frontier.

That the Pallavas were in a decline is clear from the fact that the Pandya King Varaguna was unopposed in his march into Tondaimandalam. Varaguna Pandya because of disturbance at home was unable to take advantage of his march into Tondaimandalam and had to return to his capital. Taking advantage of Varaguna's withdrawal, the Pallava King Aparajita, got together his allies, chief among them being western Ganga Prithivipathi I and Aditya Chola, and attacked Varaguna at Sripurambiyam. The battle ended in a complete victory for the Pallava King and his allies.

The battle stemmed the rising power of the Pandyas on the one hand and the decline of the Pallavas on the other. "The Pandyas never recovered from this staggering blow. And the Pallavas, though victory remained with them in the battle, owed it more to their allies than to their own strength. Thoroughly exhausted by incessant warfare on the two fronts they were themselves in no position to pursue the advantage gained. (Sastriar—Colas, p. 130.)

Apart from stemming the success of the Pandya and the decline of the Pallavas, the battle is important as marking the beginning of the revival of the Chola power under Aditya. "More lucky than the Ganga monarch, Aditya lived to share the spoils of the victory" and he was not slow to take advantage of the times. Freed for the moment from the dread of attack or annexation by the Pandya, he turned his attention to strengthen his position and eventually to oust the Pallava Aparajita from his throne and territory.

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## IV THE BATTLE OF VELLUR

OR

THE CONQUEST AND ANNEXATION OF THE  
PANDYA TERRITORY BY THE CHOLAS

THE battle of Sripurambiyam stemmed the power of the Pandyas and the battle of Vellur altogether extinguished their power. We have a clear account of the battle of Vellur in the Mahawanso. Moreover two inscriptions of the 12th year of Parantaka make casual references to the battle. The Udayendiram plates issued by Prithivipathi II, Hasthimalla of the Ganga dynasty in the 15th year (A.D. 921) of Maduraikonda Parakesari Varman Parantaka Chola I also refer to the battle. Parantaka I was the son and successor of Aditya Chola I who took part in the battle of Sripurambiyam. Parantaka ascended the throne in the year 907 A.D. and he followed up his father's victories by putting an end to the Pandyan independence and extending his empire up to Kanya Kumari in the south.



Soon after his accession Parantaka invaded the Pandya country and capturing Madura, took the title of "Madurai Kondan". The Pandya King, Rajasimha, was not strong enough to check Parantaka's progress and so sought the aid of the Ceylonese ruler. Rajasimha sent messengers after messengers to the Ceylonese ruler. The Mahawanso says, "While thus the sovereign of Lanka (Kassappa V-913—23) held sway in justice, the Pandya King was vanquished in the battle by the Chola King. To gain military aid, he sent numerous gifts. The king, the ruler of Lanka, took counsel with his officers, equipped military forces, appointed his Sakkasenapathi as leader of the troops and betook himself to the Mahathitta. Standing at the edge of the coast, he spoke of the triumph of the former kings and thus arousing their enthusiasm, he made his troops embark. With his army the Sakkasenapathi, thereupon, safely crossed the sea and reached the Pandya country. When the Pandya King saw the troops and him, he spake full of cheer, "I will join all Jambudwipa under one umbrella".

The king took the two armies, but as he could not vanquish him "the king, of the Cola line set out once more. . . . with the purpose of fighting further". (The Colas—p. 144).

The battle described above relates to the battle of Vellur, where Parantaka I completely routed the combined Pandyan and Ceylonese armies. The Udayendiram plates referred to above, narrates an account of the battle thus: "Having slain in an instant at the head of a battle an immense army despatched by the Lord of Lanka, which teamed with brave soldiers (and) was interspersed with troops of elephants and horses he (Parantaka) bears in the world the title Sangrama Raghava (*i.e.*, Rama in battle), which is full of meaning. When he defeated the Pandya (king) Rajasimha, two persons experienced the same fear at the same time; (Kubera) the lord of wealth on account of the death of his own friend (and) Vibhishana on account of the proximity (of the Chola dominions to Ceylon)."—S. I. I. II No. 76.

It is clear from the above statements that a great and decisive battle took place

between Parantaka I and Rajasimha in which Parantaka was successful. "The victory of Parantaka at Vellur, paved the way for the progressive conquest and annexation of the Pandya country". Moreover, the Pandya King fled to Ceylon leaving his ancient heritage to fall into the hands of his enemy. The Mahawanso records of his flight as follows: "At that time the Pandya King, through fear of the Chola (King), left his country, took ship and came to Mahathitta. The king had him brought to him, rejoiced greatly when he saw him, gave him an abundant income, and granted him a dwelling outside the town". The Thiruvelangadu plates confirm the above facts in a verse, which is translated as follows: "Encircled by the fire of his (Parantaka) prowess, the Pandya, as if desirous of cooling the heat caused by it, quickly entered the sea (embarked to Ceylon), abandoning his royal state and the kingdom inherited from his ancestors."

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V  
THE BATTLE OF RAOR  
OR  
THE ARAB CONQUEST OF SIND

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THE battle of Raor is important in Indian history as marking the Arab conquest of Sind and the beginning of the Muhammadan invasion which, eventually, resulted in the establishment of Muhammadan rule in India.

Many are the views regarding the identification of Raor referred to by the early Muhammadan historians. Haig places Raor in "Lower Sind", 80 miles from Brahmanabad and about 70 miles to the south-east of Haiderabad. Raverty locates Raor within ten miles of Brahmanabad. The identifications referred to above do not agree with facts disclosed by the Muhammadan historians. Professor R. C. Majumdar in his book "The Arab Invasion of Sind" conclusively identifies Raor, with the modern town of Rohri on the western bank of Indus, important even in the present day as commanding

the railway bridge, which connects the island of Bukkar in the midstream and Sukkur on the right bank of the Indus. The battle of Raor took place between Muhammad-ibn-Kasim, representing the Muhammadan Caliphate, and Dahir, ruler of Sind.

The chief sources for the reconstruction of an account of the Arab raids into Sind are (a) *Kitab Fatuh-ul-Bulden*, written by Al Baladhuri and (b) the *Cachnama*, a Persian translation of an old Arabic history of the conquest of Sind by the Arabs, translated about 1216 A.D. The *Cachnama* gives a detailed account of the conquest of Sind by the Arabs.

“Like the nose of the alligator, Sind is the most vulnerable part of India, being exposed to foreign attack. The back of the country is covered by the Himalayan chain and is therefore like the back of an alligator, impossible to assail. The head of the country and its forehead too are protected by the Hindukush and the Sulaiman ranges and are therefore practically unassailable. It is lower down, where the river Indus falls into the sea

that there is no natural obstacle in the path of a foreign invader. The nose of India is doubtless approachable through a sandy desert country without much water, but to those who are accustomed to traverse deserts on camels and mules, Sind is easily accessible and hence, it is, that it has frequently fallen a prey to foreign invaders in the history of Ancient India.”\* The two other States forming North-Western Frontier of India, higher up Sind were known as Zabul and Kabul, more precisely Zabulistan and Kabulistan. The Arab armies tried in vain to expand into Kabulistan and Zabulistan and being unsuccessful in that direction turned their armies against Sind through the Makran coast.

At the time of the Arab invasion Raja Dahir, son of Cach, was the ruler of Sind. He had his capital at Alor. The modern town of Rohri stands close by the ruins of Alor, on the banks of Sikkim, which the native historians called Mihram.

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\* “History of Mediæval Hindu India” by C. V. Vaidya, Vol. I, p. 169.

Raja Dahir was in possession of Multan and all Sind with perhaps the adjoining plains of the Indus, as far as the mountains of Kalabagh and also to those of Karman, on the west. The Rajput feudal system was then prevalent in Sind and the territory was portioned among Dahir's relatives.

The immediate cause of the Arab attack on Sind, which led to a permanent conquest later on, was the uncalled for attack on the Arab ship near the mouth of the Indus at Debal by the pirates. The ruler of Ceylon had despatched eight vessels filled with presents and envoys to secure the goodwill of Hajaj and the Caliph. These ships were plundered by the pirates at Debal. Debal or Diwal was a port on the Indus in the territory of Dahir. The identification of Debal had been a moot point with the historians. "It is strange that the site of a port, once so noted as Debal, should now be left to vague conjecture", says the historian. Native authorities seem decidedly in favour of identifying Debal with Thatta, while some historians make Debal lie between Thatta and Karachi. Elliot, however,

definitely asserts: "But there can be no question that Debal was on or close to the sea coast, with which the distant inland city of Thatta is by no means correspondent. For my own part, I entertain little doubt that Karachi itself represents the site of Debal".\* Debal was a port on the Indus in the territory of Dahir.

Hajaj nominally Governor of Iraq, but in fact, the ruler over all the country, demanded reparation from Dahir, ruler of Sind. Dahir declined compliance on the ground that he had no control over the pirates and declared his inability to restrain and repair the excess. Thereupon Hajaj earnestly sought the permission of the Caliph to attack Debal and to exact due vengeance from Dahir and his subjects. Hajaj promised to pay the Caliph double the cost of the expedition on a successful return and obtained permission to attack Dahir. He then sent Muhammad Kasim against Dahir.

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\* The History of India as told by its own historians.



Mahammad Kasim, known as Muhammad Bin Kasim Sakifi, then a youth of seventeen, was entrusted with the work of chastising Dahir. He was equipped with an army of 6,000 armed camel riders, 6,000 picked cavalry of Syria and Iraq and a baggage train of 8,000 Bactrian camels. In Makran he was joined by the Governor Muhammad Harun with other reinforcements. Moreover he had five catapults together with the necessary ammunition transported by sea to Debal. Besides these Arab troops, many Jats and Medes enlisted themselves under Muhammad Bin Kasim's banner.

With this army, he successfully besieged Debal and breaking the standard of the Hindus reduced the City of Debal. A son of Dahir who was in the city of Debal either as a master or as an ally retreated, on the reduction of the city, to Brahmanabad. Kasim then advanced on Neron (now Hyderabad in Sind) and thence upon Saliwon and took the fortress called Salim. Thus far Kasim's progress met with little opposition. Here he was confronted with a powerful army

under the command of the Raja's eldest son. After several indecisive encounters, Muhammad Kasim advanced to the neighbourhood of the capital Alor itself.

The Caohnama referred to as Tarikhi-i-Sind, by Elphinstone, gives a vivid account of the battle and is here reproduced in part as translated by Elliot and Dowson. (The History of India as told by its historians.)

"Muhammad Kasim sends a Syrian ambassador and Maulana Islami to Dahir. When they came to Dahir, Maulana Islami of Debal did not bow his head or make any signs of reverence. Dahir recognised him and asked him why he failed in the usual respectful salutation and enquired if any one had thrown obstacles in his way. The Maulana of Debal replied, "When I was your subject it was right of me to observe the rule of obediences: but now, that I am converted and subject to the king of Islam, it cannot be expected that I should bow my head to an infidel." Dahir said "If you were not an ambassador I would punish you with death." The Maulana replied, "If you would kill me,

it would be no great loss to the Arabs; but they will avenge my death and exact the penalty from you".

Muhammad Kasim's route to Alor lay over the river and so he determined to cross the river but was apprehensive that the Rai Dahir might come to the banks of Mihran and oppose the transit. Hence to have an easy passage Muhammad Kasim secured the aid of Moka, son of Bisaya, who was a ruler of the island of Bait in the river and was subject to Dahir. It is the base desertion of the chief of the island of Bait that had been the root cause of the defeat of the ruler of Sind. The historian referred to sings:

"Muhammad Kasim examines the ford  
Dahir hears Moka Bisaya had collected  
boats.

Dahir gives the government of Bait to  
Rasil."

"When Muhammad Kasim had collected his boats and began to join them together, Rasil with his officers and chiefs come to the opposite banks and prevent the completion of the bridge and the passage

of the river. Muhammad Kasim thereupon ordered that the boats should all be brought to the western bank and there joined together to a distance equal to the estimated breadth of Mihran. He then placed his warriors fully armed upon the boats and let the head of the bridge which was full of archers to float down to the eastern bank. The archers drove off the infidels who were posted to guard the passage. So the Arabs passed over to the other side and driving pegs into the earth made the bridge fast. The horse and the foot then crossed and giving battle put the infidels to flight and pursued them as far as the gates of Jhani."

"Dahir awakes and kills his chamberlain for bringing him news of the flight of the infidels and the victory of Islam." Rasil who had hitherto been subject to Dahir and opposing Kasim, deserts Dahir and joins Kasim's army. On his advice Muhammad Kasim advanced to Rewa and arrived at a place called Jewar or Jaipur. "Intelligence was brought to Rai Dahir that Muhammad Kasim with the Arab

army had reached Jewar and when his minister Sisakar heard of it he said, 'Alas! We are lost'. That place is called Jaipur or the town of victory and as the army had reached the place it will be successful and victorious". Dahir took offence at these words. The fire of indignation blazed out in his mind and he said with his anger, "he has arrived at Hindbari for it is a place where his bones shall lie". Dahir left the place and with precipitation went into the fort of Rewar. Only a big lake separated the fort of Rewar from the Arab force. Muhammad encamped at Jitor on the stream of Dohrab. Rai Dahir leaving his dependants in the fort rushed forth to the open and fought the invaders. The author of Cachnama writes:—

Muhammad Kasim Sikifi reads the  
Khutba.

Muhammad Kasim exhorts his soldiers,  
The Arab army charges the infidels

Shuja Hanshi becomes a martyr

Muhammad Kasim charges in the name  
of God

The accursed Dahir is slain.

So narrates the Muslim writer of the Cachnama. Dahir was slain at the fort of Rewar (Raor) at sunset on Thursday the tenth of Ramzan in the year 93, *i.e.*, June 712 A.D.

The causes that led to the fall of Sind are many. The usurpation of Cach, the subsequent division of the kingdom among Cach's sons and their wars with the neighbouring kingdoms of Kashmir, Kanuj and Ramal and lastly the existence of powerful Buddhist monks who as political rulers of districts, wielded great influence, worked inimically to the Brahmanical State; the desertion of a great many chiefs and the utter lack of military perspective on the part of Dahir, all these contributed to the downfall of the Hindu kingdom of Sind.

"The conquest of Sind should not be regarded as indicating in a general way the superiority of the Muslims (Arabs) over the Indians from a military point of view". The success of the Muslims was largely due to the lavish equipment of Muhammad-Bin-Kasim, to the encouragement given by Hajaj and lastly

to the utter disunity and treachery of the chiefs of Sind and to the superstitious ideas prevalent at that time. King Dahir, though brave and courageous, lacked statesmanship and military skill. His failure to realise the importance of a command over the sea as essential for the success of an invading army marching across the Makram coast and to provide against the same was yet another cause of his failure. Most of the officers, being Buddhists, had an aversion to war and bloodshed and failed to co-operate effectively with Dahir. Dahir's failure to oppose the Muslims crossing the Sind river also contributed to the Muslim success. "To the inexplicable want of strategy on the part of Dahir and of the treachery of the Buddhists of the south, we must add the base betrayals of the chief officials and grandees of Sind to account for its ruler's ignominious end. All important chiefs and officials seem to have deserted his cause. This is partly accounted by the superstitious idea that according to the Hindu Sastras, the country was destined to fall into the hands of the

Muhammadans and it was therefore useless to fight."

"The Arab conquest of Sind has been described as a mere episode in the history of India, which affected only a fringe of that vast country." Yet, due to the increase of trade and interchange of ideas, Arab Sind formed a link between the East and the West. The conquest of Sind was the first and the last great achievement of the Arabs in India and three centuries of unremittent efforts on their part secured them only two petty states of Mansur and Multan. The Arabs occupied the Indus valley but their attempt at expansion further inland received a setback from the alert Indians. "When we remember their wonderful military success in other parts of Asia and Africa, the comparatively insignificant results they achieved in India certainly stand out as a marked contrast. The causes of this, however, do not lie in the religious and social peculiarities of India as old historians like Elphinstone vainly attempted to establish. The cause lies undoubtedly in the superior military strength and state organisation of the Indians as compared with most other nations of the time." (The Arab Invasion of India by Majumdar).

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VI  
THE BATTLE OF LAGHMAN  
OR  
THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF AFGHANISTAN:

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THE little known battle of Laghman is important in the annals of India, for it resulted in the establishment of Muhammadan rule on the frontiers of India and paved the way for the later Muhammadan invasions into India, especially, the immediate expeditions of Muhammad of Ghazni into India. Laghman is situated at the entrance to the valley, which extends from Peshawar to Kabul. The valley is known after the city and has been identified with Lampaka of Sanskrit tradition. The district of Laghman lies north of Kabul river between the Kunar and Alinagar.

India in the tenth century included almost the whole of modern Afghanistan which was then divided into Kabulistan and Zabulistan. All the country east of the river Helmund was then called Hindustan. The Brahmin dynasty founded

by Lalitha ruled over Kabul, while Zabul was ruled over by the Rajput or Kshatriya kings. The first Muslim invasion of the modern Afghanistan took place under a brave and ambitious brahmin by name Yakub-i-lais. He captured Herat in 301 Hijra and also overran Zabulistan and Kabulistan. He captured Kabul from the Brahmin kings of the place, who later withdrew further east. Ever since his raid Kabul has remained in the possession of the Muhammadans. The Brahmin kings soon regained possession of Kabul and exacted a nominal submission from the Muhammadans of the place, but withdrew to Wahind on the west bank of the Indus and made it the seat of government. Yakub-i-lais is said to have laid the foundations of the city of Ghazni, which later on became the seat of a Turkish government.

Alptigain, at first Hajib or door-keeper to the king Abdul Malik, rose to prominence and established an independent principality at Gazni and was succeeded by a Turkish slave (his son-in-law), Sabuktigin. Having conquered Kandahar

and Burst, the capital of Zabulistan, Sabuktagin attempted to extend his territories towards the east, where the kingdoms of India lay. His immediate neighbour on the east was Jaipal, a Brahmin king of Hindustan, Kabul and Lahore. This king had his capital at Wahind or Udbhanda on the western bank of the Indus, in the vicinity of Peshawar and his kingdom comprised the upper valley of the Indus and most of the Punjab to the north of Sind extending westward to the mountains.

The Tarikhi Yamini or Kitab-ul-Yamini, written by Al'Utbi, a contemporary of Amir Sabuktagin, gives a complete account of the Muhammadan occupation of Laghman. That Sabuktagin was the aggressor is evident from the following statement of Utbi. "He made frequent expeditions into Hind in the prosecutions of holy wars and there he conquered forts upon lofty hills and he captured cities in Hind which had up to that time been tenanted only by infidels and not trodden by camels and horses of Mussalmans", (Elliot-II-p. 18).

Jaipal, king of Lahore, marked the aggression, the slow and steady expansion of Muhammadan power and sought to stem the onrush of the Muhammadans. With this object he marched with all his troops into the valley of Laghman and became an aggressor in his turn, laying waste the territory of the Muhammadans. Utbi writes, "Then he (Jaipal) arose with his relations and the generals of his army and his vassals and hastened with his huge elephants to wreak his vengeance upon Sabuktagin". Sabuktagin with his army set out from Ghazni and encountered Jaipal encamped in the valley of Laghman. Utbi says, "The armies fought several days successively against each other". He further relates that Sabuktagin believing in the superstitious ideas to come true had ordered a fountain to be defiled and "immediately upon his doing so, the horrors of the day of resurrection, rose up before the wicked infidels, and fire fell from heaven on them and hailstones accompanied by loud claps of thunder; and a blast calculated to shake trees from their roots, blew

upon them and thick and black vapours formed around them as that they could not see the road by which they could fly, and their food and water were filled with dust". The supernatural agency above recorded has only to be viewed as an exaggeration and accordingly should be discarded. That the Hindu army suffered most from the cold and snow and probably from hailstorms has to be accepted. Thus Jaipal, "handicapped for want of pure water to drink and harassed by the intense cold of the inclement adventitious weather to which the Hindu soldiers of Northern India were not accustomed", had to sue for peace. At first the Muhammadans were not for peace, but being threatened by Jaipal that the Hindus, if compelled, will resist to the last person, Sultan Amir and Muhammad agreed to offer peace terms. What exactly were the terms accepted by Jaipal is not clear and the Muhammadan historian Utbi mentions the cession of certain frontier fortresses to the Muhammadans as a condition for peace and goes on to relate that Jaipal after withdrawing

his army and men from the Laghman valley, basely repudiated the terms. The charge of treachery levelled against Jaipal seems to be unfounded and appears to be unsustainable. The defeat of the Hindus, if at all it can be called a defeat, is only nominal and as such the surrender of frontier fortresses in Jaipal's territory would not have been agreed to by the Hindu ruler. It was by a threat of fighting to the last person, if compelled, that the Hindu Ruler had forced the Muhammadan Amir to offer terms, and Jaipal would not have consented to part with a fortress still less a frontier fortress. If it had been agreed to, which is most doubtful, "Jaipal was not the man to treacherously break it as soon as he was safe within his own territory. The Brahmin kings of Kabul, like in fact Rajaput kings of the whole of India at this time, were men of honour. Even Alberuni praises this high character; Muhammadan though he was, he was a truthful observer of the Hindus and their character; and he gives a very flattering account of the probity and goodness of

these kings of Kabul. (History of Mediæval India, Vol. III, 27.) Utbi himself relates in one place that Sabuktagin "considered it false as being opposed to the usual habits of Jaipal."

In another place Utbi remarks that Sabuktagin "sharpened the sword of intention in order to make an incursion upon his (Jaipal's) kingdom and cleanse it from impurity and from his (Jaipal's) rejection of Islam". The above remark clearly shows that in the first fight related above, Sabuktagin had not had the upper hand and that he after the truce and withdrawal of Jaipal and his army to Punjab attempted once more to establish his authority over Laghman valley. This incursion into the valley is clearly described by Utbi. "So he (Sultan Sabuktagin) departed with his valiant servants and allies and relying upon the one God, and trusting in the fulfilment of the promise of victory, and he went on till he arrived with his troops in the country of Hind and he killed everyone, who on the part of Jaipal came to oppose him".

"The Amir marched out towards Laghman, which is a city celebrated for its strength and abounding in wealth. He conquered it and set fire to the places in its vicinity which were inhabited by the infidels and demolishing the idol temples, he established Islam in them. He marched and captured other cities and killed the polluted wretches, destroying the idolatrous and gratifying the Mussalmans. On the completion of his conquest, he returned and promulgated an account of the victories obtained for Islam, and every one great and small, concurred in rejoicing over the result and thanking God."

It was this incursion and ruthless massacre of the Hindus of the Laghman valley that was responsible for another coalition of the Hindus under Jaipal and his march into the Laghman valley. Thus it was not the base repudiation of the treaty by Jaipal, that was responsible for the battle of Laghman, but the wanton aggression and massacre of the Hindus by Sabuktagin was the chief cause. Many of the Hindu chiefs, realising the necessity to stem the tide of the-



Muhammadan aggression sent aid to Jaipal of Lahore. Determined to fight the invaders, Jaipal collecting his troops marched towards the Laghman valley to fight and establish his sway over the place. "When Amir Sabuktagin heard this intelligence, he again advanced to fight him. He urged the Mussalmans upon the un-circumcised infidels and they willingly obeyed his orders. He made bodies of 500 attack the enemy with their maces in hand and relieve each other when one party became tired, so that fresh men and horses were constantly employed till the accursed enemy complained of the heat, which arose from that iron oven. These detached parties made one united charge, in order to exterminate their numerous opponents."

The historian goes on describing, "The dust which arose prevented the eyes from seeing; swords could not be distinguished from spears, men from elephants, the valiant from the coward. It was only when the dust was allayed, that it was found that the impure infidels were defeated and had fled, leaving behind,

their property, utensils, army, provisions, elephants and horses".

The result was the utter discomfiture of the Hindus. The Raja was contented to offer the best things in his most distant provinces to the conqueror on condition that the hair on the crowns of their heads should not be shaven off. So the country in the neighbourhood was clear and open before Amir Sabuktagin".

As narrated above, the Punjab lay before the invader. All the same he did not seize it. He took an immense booty and left Punjab to have its own sway. He, however, paved the way for his son Muhammad to seize Punjab and include it in his dominions.

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# VII THE BATTLE OF TARAIN

OR  
"THE HASTINGS OF INDIA"

OR  
THE AFGHAN CONQUEST OF NORTHERN  
INDIA

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THE battle-field of Tarain is important in the history of India, as deciding the fate of Northern India in the contest for ascendancy between the Hindus as represented by the Rajputs and the Muhammadans under the Muhammad Ghorî. Two battles in two successive years, 1191 and 1192, were fought and in the first the Hindus were victorious and in the second the Muhammadans won the battle. It was the second battle that decided the fate of Hindu India and as such Tarain has become the Hastings of India.

The field of Tarain is now identified with Tirawari or Azimabad-i-Tirawari, a village in the district and Tahsil of Karnal, Punjab and is situated in 29° 48' N and 76° 59' E. The village is 14 miles south of Thaneshwar and is 84 miles north of Delhi.

It is now reached by the Delhi Amballa-Kalka Railway. It derives its modern name Azambad-i-Tilawari from Azam Shah, son of Aurangzeb, and is important as Azam Shah's birth place.

The scene of the battle is said to have lain on the Sarusti, but Cunningham opined that the exact site was on the banks of Raukshi river four miles south of Tirawari and ten miles north of Karnal. The *Karnal Gazetteer* gives the latest information and states that the battle was fought at Nondina, a village in the Naiwasi in the Nardak, twelve miles south of Thaneshwar and three miles from Taraon. Whatever be the place identified, the battle will go down in history as the battle of Tarain, though the author of *Tabakat-i-Nasari*, the chief source for an account of the battle, gives the name as Narain.

An account of the Ghori dynasty and the Rajput kingdoms of Northern India furnishes a fitting historical background to the battle.

Ghor was a place north-west of Ghazni and was peopled by the Afghans who were

originally Hindus but later became converts to Muhammadanism before and during the days of Muhammad Ghazni. The founder of the kingdom of Ghor was Allauddin who fought with the last Mahmudi King of Ghazni and drove him out of the place. Allauddin sacked and burnt Ghazni for several days and so is known to history as Allauddin Jahansoz.

Muiz-ud-din Muhammad Bin Sam otherwise known as Muhammad Ghori was a nephew of Allauddin and was appointed in conjunction with his brother Ghiyas-ud-din to the charge of a province in Ghor. Some historians call Muhammad Ghori, "Shahabuddin Ghori" or the flaming star of religion. Ghor conquered Multan in 1175 and took Peshawar in 1179. He then threatened the Mahmudi capital at Lahore. Sultan Khushru of Lahore, the last of the Mahmudi dynasty, sued for peace. In the year 1184 Ghor attacked Lahore again and took Sultan Khushru Malik prisoner. Thus the Punjab fell into the hands of the Afghans and the Turks of Ghazni, who were then the rulers of the Punjab, were driven out of their territory. The

conquest of the Punjab gave Muhammad Ghorī a footing in India, wherefrom he could easily assail the Hindu kingdoms of the north. In his immediate neighbourhood was the kingdom of Ajmer and Delhi and his career of expansion brought him into conflict with Prithivī Rāj Chauhan, ruler of Ajmer and Delhi,—the Rāj Pithawa of the Muslim historians. Prithivirāj succeeded his father Someswara to the throne of Ajmer and Delhi in the year 1177 and ruled up to 1192. He belonged to the famous Rājput clan the Chauhāns (also known as the Chahamanas or the Chohāns), who had their original seat of government in Southern Rājputāna. His achievements are recorded by his protégé Chand in a Hīndī epic known as Prithivirāj Rāsā. Another work, in Sanskrit the Prithivirāj Vijaya Kavya, also celebrates his exploits. The Rāsā states that his mother was a daughter of Anangapāl of Delhi, while two other sources, the Prithivirāj Vijaya Kavya and Hanmīrkavya make her to be a Chedi princess by name Karpuradevī. Equally indefinite is the date and place of his birth.

scholars holding different opinions. According to one he was born in 1149: while another states it to be 1158. One of his queens was Inhhini, daughter of Jai Paramara of Abu. Princess Samyogita, daughter of Jaichand of Kanuj, loved him and was the youngest of his queens. The romantic love affair of Prithviraja and Samyogita, who heedless of her father's views, elected to throw her garland of flowers, signifying her choice on an image which was supposed to represent Prithviraja and was stationed at the gates as a mark of disrespect to the Chauhan prince, and her unhesitating action in following her lord of choice, when he appeared before her at the time, and his flight with her to his strong fortress; all these have immortalised the name of Prithviraja. Hence it is he has been styled as "the last Hindu chivalrous Emperor of India".

In his time three great kings contended with him for the imperial dignity as Chakravartin of Northern India. Bhima, ruler of Guzarat, Paramardi Deva of Bundelkhand and Jaichand of Kanuj, each in his own way endeavoured to

become the Chakravartin of Northern India. In two successful wars, one against Guzarat in 1179 and another against Bundlekhand in 1182, Prithviraja established his fame throughout Northern India and boldly styled himself as the Emperor of Northern India. The bitterness aroused in the mind of Jaichandra by the romantic love affair between Prithviraja and Samyogita, gave place to hate and jealousy and in turn gave rise to a deadly feud between the two Rajput houses of Delhi and Kanuj. Jaichand, who had aspired for the imperial position, was however checked by Prithviraja and it is this discomfiture of Jaichand at the hands of Prithviraja, that was also responsible for the long feud between the two kingdoms, which led to such disastrous results later on.

Rasa of Chand, Taj-ul-Masiri of Nizam-ud-din and Tabakat-i-Nasari of Minhaj-us-Siraj, give us a complete, though a slightly exaggerated account of the conflict. Only Tabakat-i-Nasari gives an account of the fight and defeat of Ghori at Tarain. The extract is here given from Tabakat-i-Nasari as translated and given by Ellio



(the History of India as told by its own Historians in Vol. II, p. 295). "The first attack was made by Muhammad Ghor, on the fort of Sirhind, which was taken and placed under a Muhammadan governor. Rai Pithaura came up against the fort and the Sultan faced him at Narain. All the 'Rais of Hindustan were with the Rai Kolah. In the fight, the Sultan, seizing a lance attacked Govindrai of Delhi, who was riding an elephant, the Sultan being on horseback. The Sultan, who was the second Rustum and the lion of the age, drove his lance into the mouth of Govindrai and knocked down two of his teeth. The Rai, however, by his blow wounded severely one arm of his adversary. The Sultan reined back his horse and turned aside. As the Sultan began to totter on his horse, an intrepid young Afghan sprang upon the Sultan's horse and supported him and took the horse safely away. But the army thinking that the Sultan was killed, gave way and fled and thus was inflicted a severe defeat upon the Muhammadans". The Rasa makes mention of the capture

and release of the Sultan several times by Prithiviraj. This statement is no doubt an exaggeration, but it has to be accepted that there must have been some truth behind it. That the Sultan was captured and allowed to return by Prithiviraj on a ransom of 30 elephants and 500 horses is not improbable. The fact that the Sultan was defeated on the occasion is admitted by both the sides.

The author of *Tabakat-i-Nasari* mentions that Prithiviraja was helped by other rajas and that a confederacy was formed to check the Muhammadan advance. It has to be pointed out here that Prithiviraj had no time to call such a confederacy and it has to be said that he fought the enemy single-handed and successfully defeated them.

The first battle of Tarain was a victory for the Hindus and it was the discomfiture suffered by the Muhammadans in this battle that led to the subsequent attack upon the Hindu kingdoms the very next year. Like the battle of Marathon in Greek history, the first battle of Tarain, in Indian History, was fraught with dire consequences.

It is indeed true that the battle of Tarain enhanced the reputation of Prithiviraja, who had, by his victory over the Chandalas, Gahadavals, and Chalukyas, already become the acknowledged Emperor or Chakravartin of Northern India. But his victory at Tarain inflamed the jealousy of his erstwhile competitor for the imperial dignity, Jaichand of Kanuj, who kept himself aloof in the second battle of Tarain and allowed the Chauhan Emperor to be defeated.

Taj-ul-Masiri suppresses all account of the first battle and begins with the second expedition of Muhammad Ghorī on India. It attributes a religious motive to Ghorī and gives no detail about the conflict but merely states the Muhammadan army was victorious.

Minhaj-us-Siraj in his book *Tabakat-i-Nisari* states that "Rai Pithaura alighted from his elephant, mounted a horse and galloped off, but he was captured near Sisruti and sent to hell". History has yet to solve the mystery surrounding the fate of Rai Pithaura, who had become the hero of many a ballad of this country, the king: Arthur of India.

The causes for the failure of the Hindus and the success of the Muhammadan hordes are many; chief among them being the internecine struggle between the various Rajput rulers of Northern India. The strife between the Chauhans of Delhi and the Rathora of Kanuj has found expression in the ballads celebrating the famous Swayamvara of Samyukta, daughter of Jaichand of Kanuj and the heroic exploits of Prithivi Raj of Chauhan dynasty. It was the signal failure of Jaichand of Kanuj to think in terms of Hindu and India and co-operate with Prithivi Raj that brought about the destruction of the Hindu-Rajput dominance of India. The Hindu power suffered an irreparable blow and Hindu independence gave place to Muslim domination. The battle paved the way for the future Muhammadan occupation of India, which eventually was to culminate in the establishment of the Mughal dominion over all India. The Punjab fell before Muhammad, the Turkish ruler of Ghazni; Northern India fell before Shahabuddin, the Afghan king of Ghor.

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# VIII

## THE FIRST BATTLE OF PANIPAT

OR  
THE MUGHAL CONQUEST OF INDIA

OR  
THE TRANSFERENCE OF THE EMPIRE  
OF HINDUSTAN FROM THE AFGHAN TO THE  
CHAGHATI TURKS

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PANIPAT and its vicinity is important in Indian history as the field of many a battle fought for the dominance of India and particularly Northern India. "From Delhi past Panipat to Karnal, Thaneshwar, stretches the great plain a dreary yellow waste. . . Everywhere a silent void,—as if the plain were intended by nature to be the battle-field of nations. If this were the intent with which the great plain of Delhi was created it has been fulfilled over and over again for over 3,000 years.

"It was upon this plain at Narain beyond Karnal that the last Rajput king of Delhi met Ghore and drove him back. Upon the same place a year later the Rajput host again awaited the invader and were defeated and mowed down by

‘thousands. It was the deathblow to the Rajput domination in Hindustan and never again has one of the first-born races ruled Delhi.”

“More than three hundred years later .Zahuruddin Babar, the Mughal, broke the undisciplined host of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi Khan near Panipat and won Delhi for himself and his descendants. On the self-same spot his grandson, Akbar, overthrew the army of Bengal, that would have driven him and his Khans back to the northern hills, whence their father came. Nearly 200 years more and Nadir Shah, the Persian, was met on the plain by a feeble army and an unready king, who had not the spirit to die well, though they stood upon the ground made holy with the blood of heroes. Three and twenty years after his coming, the leader of the great Maharatta confederacy sent round the word, “the cup is full to the brim and cannot hold another drop” and “led his troops out of the fortified camp at Panipat, to be cut to pieces by the Afghans of Ahmad Shah Durani”. Such has been the importance of the Carri plain

in general and Panipat in particular. Three decisive battles were fought at Panipat, all with far-reaching consequences.

The first battle of Panipat is important in the history of India as "it ushered in a new era and a new dynasty on the throne of Delhi." India on the eve of Babar's conquest did not represent the great Muhammadan empire of Firoz Shah but was an agglomeration of petty independent principalities, the rule of several disjointed provinces, owing no obedience to any one common and central authority. Delhi ceased to be the capital and mistress of India. Bahlul Lodi, an Afghan supplanting the Sayyid dynasty, founded the new Lodi dynasty and for a time succeeded in welding the crumbling Muhammadan Sultanate of Delhi. But when his successor, Sikandhar Khan Lodi, died in 1518, there was again confusion in the capital and though Ibrahim Lodi, son of Sikandhar Khan, was raised to the throne, he had to allow his Afghan nobles to gain the upper hand. This led to quarrel and disaffection among the nobles and Allauddin, uncle of the Sultan, fled to Babar and implored him

to place him on the throne of Delhi, while another chief Dowlat Khan of Lahore principality, being sore pressed by Ibrahim's general sought the assistance of Babar promising in return to accept Babar's sovereignty over his territories. It is the feudal character of the nobility and the Delhi government, that enabled the foreign foe to step in, at first as an ally, and later as conqueror.

Babar was not slow in seizing the opportunity thus afforded. Babar, son of Umar Sheikh, ruler of Farghana, was born at Kesh in the year 1483. At the age of 12, he succeeded to his father's dominions, but was, however, driven out of his own province and roamed as an adventurer. In October, 1504, he seized Kabul and "at once became king of Kabul and Ghazni, a kingdom more powerful than Farghana, which he had inherited and lost" (Rulers of India Series: Babar.) His stay at Kabul and the possibility of expanding his dominions across and outside the Laghman valley, induced him to make punitive expeditions into the Punjab. The expeditions were not fruitful. All the same, he did not



-despair. He writes in his memoirs, "Filled  
 -as I was by the ambition of conquest and  
 -broad sway one or two reverses could not  
 -make me sit down doing nothing." Thus  
 it was though he had invaded India with-  
 -out effecting any real conquest, yet he did  
 -not give up his idea of conquest and  
 -expansion into the Punjab. On the other  
 hand, he made preparations for an effective  
 -expansion. He foresaw the possibility of  
 -acquiring dominion in India and realising  
 -the importance of Kandahar as a base for  
 -an effective expansion into India, secured  
 the stronghold and territory between Ghazni  
 -and Khorassan in the years 1520-1522, and  
 when the call came from Allauddin and  
 -Daulat Khan in 1524, he was too well pre-  
 -pared to refuse the aid.

On November 17, 1525, Babar left for  
 -Kabul on his fifth and final invasion of  
 India. At Lahore he secured the submis-  
 -sion of Daulat Khan, who had revolted  
 -against him and from thence marched to  
 -Sialkot. Here news reached him of the  
 -defeat of Alam Khan and his troops at the  
 hands of Ibrahim and it was this news  
 -of the defeat of his adherents that was

responsible for his resolve to fight Ibrahim Lodi and secure the throne of Delhi for himself. He left Sialkot and marched his troops towards Delhi to meet the Sultan's army. At Kagri he learnt that Sultan Ibrahim Lodi had ordered Hamid Khan, Shekdar or Collector of Revenue of Hissar Feroz, to oppose him. As a counter-move Babar ordered his son Humayun to surprise the force of Hamid Khan. Accordingly Humayun, helped by Kwaja Khan, Sultan Muhammad Duldari, treasurer Wali and others, surprised Hamid Khan near Amballa on the 25th of February, 1526, and captured about eight elephants. The news of the success of Humayun reached Babar's camp on the 2nd of March and Humayun presented himself before Babar on the 5th of March, 1526. As this was the first engagement and the maiden success of Humayun, viewing it to be a good omen, Babar presented a dress of honour to Humayun and allotted to him the government of Hissar Feroz, which yielded a revenue of nearly a crore of rupees.

Babar next halted at Shahabad and from there sent scouts to reconnoitre

the neighbourhood and to procure intelligence of Sultan Ibrahim's movement. Babar learnt from the scouts that an advance army under Daulat Lodi had been despatched against him by Sultan Ibrahim and so Babar sent his son-in-law, Mahdi Kwaja, and Taimur Sultan along the Jumna to surprise them. Babar here records the flight of Ibrahim's advance army. He then improvised his defences by causing the carts to be fastened to each other with cowhides, so that they may form a pallisade, as it were, against enemy attacks. Then Babar took counsel of his Amirs and decided to take a stand near the town of Panipat. Babar relied mostly on his artillery, a new development in Indian warfare. His right wing rested on the town of Panipat. In front were the Turas and the artillery with matchlock men behind them. On the left he had entrenchments made and trees fixed in a line, with outlets here and there for a hundred men or more to sally out.

Babar writes: "Many of the soldiers were in great alarm. They were in two or three months' journey from their native

land and were about to encounter a monarch, whose army was said to be 100,000 strong and his elephants 1,000. Trepidation and fear are always unseemly. Whatever Almighty God has decreed upon all eternity cannot be reversed. The emperor possessed the measure of his father and his grandfather, sufficient in current coin, to have enlisted 100,000 more soldiers, but he was miserly to the last degree and he had no experience in war. During several days that we spent at Panipat, a small party of my troops, advancing closely upon the Indian camp, discharged their arrows with impunity."

"On the 21st of April at the time of morning prayers, 1526, while it was yet twilight, the patrols reported that the enemy was approaching in battle array. We immediately braced in our armour and mounted for the combat. The right wing was led by Humayun, the left by Muhammad Zaman Mirza of Khorassan. The centre under my command was in two divisions, one headed by Chin Taimur, the other by Khalifa. The van was under Gokultash : Abdul Aziz, the master of horses,

commanded the reserve. Beyond the right wing I stationed Wali Kazil, with a flanking party of Mughals, and a similar body on the left, with an order to make circuit and fall upon the rear of the enemy. When the army of Ibrahim came in sight, it was bearing towards my right wing: therefore I detached Abdul Aziz to support Humayun. The enemy came on rapidly until the sight of our defences checked their speed. My flanking parties quickly fetched to compass to shoot arrows upon their rear and I ordered the right and left wings to charge them in front. The conflict was obstinate and I sent divisions to reinforce both Humayun and Taimur Mirza. Meanwhile Ustal Ali Kuli discharged his field pieces many times with good effect, and Mustafa Rumi, the commander on the left of the centre, did much execution with his artillery. My right, centre, left and flankers were all hotly engaged with the enemy at once. The troops of Ibrahim were entirely surrounded. They made a few spiritless charges on my right and left wings (not upon the centre because of the artillery, the Indians.

had no artillery). My soldiers plied them with arrows and drove them in upon their main body. They were thrown into such confusion that they could neither fight nor fly!" (Babar's Memoirs translated by Caldecot). "When the incitement to battle had come, the sun was spear high; till midday fighting had been in full force; noon passed; the foe was crushed in defeat, our friends rejoicing and gay. By God's mercy and kindness, this difficult affair was made easy for us. In one half day, that armed mass was laid upon the earth. Five or six thousand men were killed in one place close to Ibrahim. Our estimate of the other dead lying all over the field was 15,000 to 16,000, but it came to be known later in Agra from the statement of Hindustani's that 40,000 or 50,000 may have died in the battle". (Babar's Memoirs)..

Ibrahim's defect according to Babar was his lack of experience and failure to act promptly. Babar records: "In his hands was the treasure of two forbears. In Hindustan, when work such as this has to be done, it is customary to pay out money to hired retainers who are known

as b : d—Hindi. If it had occurred to Ibrahim to do this, he might have had another lakh or two of troops. God brought it right! Ibrahim could neither content his braves nor share out his treasure. How should he content his braves when he was ruled by avarice and had a craving insatiable to pile coin on coin? He was an unproved brave. He provided nothing for his military operations, he perfected nothing, nor stand, nor move nor fight." (Babar's Memoirs).

The battle of Panipat marks the end of the mediæval age and ushers in the modern era in India. It may be taken as the turning point in the history of India, for it laid the foundation of that empire, which in later years came to be respected at home and abroad.

It set a new dynasty on the throne of Delhi—the Mughals. But it did not give the founder, Babar, a real dominance over the country.

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# IX THE BATTLE OF KANWA

16TH MARCH, 1527

OR

THE DOWNFALL OF HINDU IMPERIAL  
RAJPUT POWER

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THE battle of Kanwa, which enabled Babar to successfully put an end to the rise of the Rajput power in Northern India, may be classed as one of the decisive battles of India. Kanwa variously spelt as Khandia or Khandua is a village in Rupbas Tahsil of the State of Bharatpur, (Rajaputana) and is close to the left bank of Bangana river and is about 13 miles south of Bharatpur city, 20 miles from Agra and 10 miles from Sikri. It was here that Babar gained a victory over Rana Sangrama Singh of Mewar.

The victory of Panipat in 1526 secured Babar the throne and province of Delhi but gave him no real dominance over Northern India; for the Rajputs, who had ever been threatening the Sultan of Delhi, were still powerful and aggressive



, in their attitude towards the new ruler of Delhi.

The Rajput leader was Rana Sangram Singh, commonly called Sanga, the head of Mewar or Chitor State. The Rana was indeed worthy of his position. He had already been the hero of a hundred fights and has been rightly described "as the fragment of a warrior" lacking an eye and an arm, with eighty scars on his body, testifying his mighty deeds. He was a great warrior, and also a statesman, who looked ahead to the future to aid him in his ambitions. But unfortunately he was forestalled by Babar, who as an astute military leader, realised and recognised the importance of Agra and secured the same immediately after his victory at Panipat.

In his memoirs Babar reveals that "Rana Sanga of Mewar had sent an embassy to Kabul, with profession of friendship and engaged to march upon Agra, if I advanced upon Delhi; yet during the whole of the campaign he did not make a single movement" (Erskine). That the Rana had the idea of capturing Agra and making it the seat of an

imperial Rajput power, cannot be gainsaid. His plan to synchronise his march against Agra with that of Babar's on Delhi, was well conceived and would have certainly ensured achievement of his object to settle Rajput power in Northern India, if he had acted upon it. That he failed to do so is also significant. What it was that prevented him from seizing the opportunity cannot be definitely stated now at this distant date. The Rana seems to have counted upon the defeat of Babar; else it would be difficult to understand, that one, who had been a hero of many a battle, and who had been fighting the Sultan of Delhi with great success, should tacitly have allied himself with the invader to establish a new power at Delhi, so near, and so dangerous to his own existence. The Rana, intent upon his own career of aggression against the Sultanate of Delhi, failed to foresee the success of Babar. He expected the imperial forces at Agra to be withdrawn to meet the Mughal invader, Babar, and the city to fall an easy prey to him. He further seems to have calculated that the city,

once captured, could be successfully defended against any siege by the Sultan's army. That the Rana belittled the invading forces under Babar and expected the imperial army of the Sultan of Delhi to be victorious and become weakened cannot be gainsaid. It was this view that must have prompted the Rana to send an embassy to Kabul suggesting to Babar a march on Delhi and promising his march upon Agra at the same time.

Though Babar was at Sialkot, it was not then decided that he should march upon Delhi and so the Rana was not sure when he was to march upon Agra. The sudden decision of Babar to give battle to Sultan Ibrahim and his rapid march towards Delhi, all in the course of a few days, and his victory over the Sultan's army, "in the space of half a day" had all been unexpected by the Rana, and so upset the Rana's calculations. Further Babar, on the very same day he won his victory at Panipat, *i.e.* on the 25th of April, 1526, despatched Humayun with an army to take possession of Agra, which he knew to be the objective of

the Rana. The Rana had practically no time to work out his plans and hence his failure to strengthen his position in and around Agra and act up to his ideas.

Dismayed at the success of the invader, the Rana, forgetting for the moment his differences with the Sultanate of Delhi, allied himself with Hassan Khan Mewat and raised to the throne one of the sons of Sikander Lodi as Padshah Muhammad Shah, to succeed Ibrahim Lodi, who was killed in the battle of Panipat. The Rana then attacked and captured Khandin, a fortress in the Biana district, east of Ranthambor, held by Hasson Makon, who had several times sought the aid of Babar. Thus it was that the Rana came into conflict with Babar.

By this time Babar had seated himself firmly on the throne of Delhi and was slowly establishing his rule over the chieftains in and around Agra. Many of the Hindustani chieftains submitted to him. He had sent his son Humayun against Jaunpur and was having hourly news in that country. News of the capture of Kandheri fortress and later the

Mansur, Qusmali and the rest from Biana, people in the army showed signs of want of heart; on the top of all this came the defeat of Abdul Aziz". To strengthen his own mind and also to hearten his troops, he renounced wine on Monday the 15th of February, 1527. His proclamation issued the next day giving an account of the renunciation shows Babar the man and is here reproduced in parts as translated by Beveridge.

"By reason of human frailty of the customs of the kings and of the great, *all of us from Shah to the Siphahi*, in the best day of our youth have transgressed and done, what we ought not to have done. . . . But the renunciation of wine, the greatest and most indispensable of renunciations, remained . . . On this occasion I received a secret inspiration. Thereupon we set ourselves to extirpate the thing of wickedness and we earnestly knocked at the gates of repentance. The Guide of Help assisted us, according to the saying, "Who ever knocks and re-knocks, to him it will be opened and an order was given that

with the holy war there should begin the still greater war." Royal wine cups of gold and silver were dashed to pieces before the army, "By the blessing of this acceptable repentance, many of the countries, by virtue of the saying that men follow the religion of their kings embraced abstinence at the same assemblage, and entirely renounced the use of wine and up till now crowds of our subjects, hourly attain this auspicious happiness. I hope that in accordance with the saying, "He who incites to good deeds has the same reward, as he who does them," "the benefit of this reaction will react on the royal fortune and increase it day by day by victories". (Beveridge). "In short, we declared with sincerity that we would subjugate our passions and I engraved on the tablet of my heart," "I turn unto thee with repentance and I am the first of the true believers." "And I made public the resolution to abstain from wine, which had been hidden in the treasury of my breast." The act of renunciation of wine, though it increased Babar's reputation and endorsed

his purpose of holy war with sanctity, yet it did not influence that spirit of enthusiasm in the army that was necessary for a successful holy war. Babar writes :  
 "Great and small had been made very anxious and timid by past occurrences. None had advice to give, none a bold plan of his own to expound. He summoned all the Beks and Braves and exhorted them to be brave with the following words :

"Better than life with a bad name, is death with a good one."

"Well it is with me, if I die with a good name."

"A good name must I have since the body is death."

"God, the Most High, has allowed to us such happiness and has created for us good fortune that we die as martyrs, we kill as avengers of his cause. Therefore must each of you take oath upon his holy word that he will not think of turning his face from his foe, or withdraw from the deadly encounter, so long as life is not rent from his body."

When he had exhorted his people with the above words, all the Beks and Braves made promise on the Holy Koran that they would not be disheartened in the prosecution of the holy war. "The plan was perfect; it worked admirably, for those near and afar, for seers and hearers, for friends and foes."

News came to Babar of the desertion of the Hindustani chiefs in several places, but he gave attention to none of them. He went on strengthening his defences as against the immediate foe, the Rana Sangha of Mewar. In battle array he left Sikri and arrived at the battle place on the 17th of March, 1528, and entrenched himself there securely.

There is a break in his memoirs and Babar refers to the letter of victory written by Shaik Zahan for an account of the battle of Kanwa. This letter has been translated by Mrs. A. S. Beveridge along with Babar's memoirs.

Babar stationed his army near the village of Kanwa. The centre was under his command. On his right were Chin Taimur Sultan, Kwaja Kamal-ud-din and



others. On his left were Sultan Allauddin Alam Khan, son of Sultan Bahlul Lodi, Nizamuddin, Tardi Beg and others. The right wing was under the command of Humayun and the left was under Sayyid Mahdi Kwaja and Abdul Aziz Ali Targjay and others. The flanks to form the famous move "Tulghama" were under more trusted officers, Tardita and Malick Quasim on the right and Mumin Ataka and Rustum Turkman on the left.

"The battle began about half past nine in the morning by a desperate charge made by the Rajputs on Babar's right. Bodies of the reserve were pushed out to its assistance and Mustafa Rumees, who commanded one portion of the artillery and matchlock in the right of the centre, opened a fire on the assailants. Still new bodies of the enemy poured on undauntedly and new detachments from the reserve were sent to resist them. The battle was no less desperate on the left, to which also it was found necessary to despatch repeatedly parties from the reserve. When the battle lasted for several hours, and still continued to rage,

Babar sent orders to the flanking columns to wheel round and charge; and he soon after ordered the guns to advance, and by a simultaneous movement, the household troops and cavalry stationed behind the cannon were ordered to gallop out on the right and left of the matchlock men in the centre, who also moved forward and continued their fire, hastening to fling themselves with all their fury to the enemy's centre. When this was observed in the wings, they also advanced. These unexpected movements made at the same moment threw the enemy into confusion. Their centre was shaken, the men who were displaced by the attack made in flank, on the wings and rear, were forced upon the centre and crowded together. Still the gallant troops were not appalled. They made repeated and desperate attacks on the emperor's centre in the hope of recovering the day; but were bravely and steadily received and swept away in great numbers. Towards evening the confusion was complete and the slaughter was consequently dreadful. The fate of the battle was decided. Nothing remained for the Rajputs but to force their way through the bodies of the enemy that were now in their rear and to effect a retreat". (Erskine).

Babar writes:—

"For the love of the Faith, I became a wanderer in the desert.

I became the antagonist of the Pagans and Hindus.

I strove to make myself a martyr.

Thanks to the Almighty God, who has made me a Ghazi."

The importance of the battle can hardly be overrated. A deathblow was given to the Rajput power in Northern India and it never more rose to that pre-eminence to make itself the master of Delhi and hold the sway over the whole of Northern India. It set Babar firmly on the throne. As Rushbrook Williams writes, "Babar had definitely seated himself upon the throne of Sultan Ibrahim and the Sign and Seal of his achievement had been the annihilation of the Sultan's most formidable antagonists. Hitherto the occupation of Hindustan might have been looked upon as an episode in Babar's career of adventure; but from henceforth it became the keynote of his activities for the remainder of his life. It is significant of the new stage in his life which this battle marks that never afterwards does he have to take his throne and life upon the issue of a stricken field. Fighting there is, and fighting in plenty, to be done; but fighting for the extension of his power, for the reduction of the rebels, for the ordering of his kingdoms. It never is fighting for the throne."

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# THE BATTLE OF TALIKOTA

OR

THE DOWNFALL OF VIJAYANAGAR

OR

MUSLIM EXPANSION INTO SOUTHERN INDIA

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THE battle of Talikota or more appropriately Rakshas-Tangidi is one of the very many decisive battles of India, and marks the beginning of the downfall of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagara and the expansion of the Muhammadan power into Southern India.

Talikota is a town in the present Muddebehal Taluk of Bijapur district in the Bombay Presidency and is situated 16° 23' N and 76° 19' E on Don 16 miles above its junction with the Krishna. It is a town with a small fortress. Though it has given its name to the battle, in truth, the battle was not fought here at all. It was only a halting place of the confederate army and as the armies had pitched up their camp here the battle has been named after the town, Talikota. It was near the two villages Rakshas

and Tangidi, some 20 miles south of the town of Talikota and on the right bank of the river Krishna that the battle, in which the Muhammadan Sultans of the Deccan defeated Rama Raya of Vijayanagar, took place on 23rd January, 1565.

Many and diverse are the sources for the construction of our account of this battle and the historian has to wade with caution into the river of the chronicles written by the historians and writers of the time. But for the authentic writings of foreign travellers it would have been an arduous task to sift the truth out of the exaggerated accounts of both Muslim and Hindu writers. Tarikhi-Ferishta and Burhani-Masir are the two best Muslim authorities on the subject. Apart from the Hindu literary sources, we have epigraphical records giving information of the battle. So far as the Hindu literary sources are concerned, the reader is referred to the Madras University publication—Sources of Vijayanagar History by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar. Foreign travellers like Canto, Fariya Sousa and others have written a hearsay account

of the battle, more accurately than the biased opinions of the local historians and writers.

The circumstances that led to the battle can best be understood by a study of the political intrigues of the time carried on by Rama Raya of Vijayanagar. Aliya Rama Raya, famous in history as Rama Raya of Vijayanagar, was, according to the anonymous chroniclers of Golkonda, cited by Ferishta, a subordinate of Kutb Shah of Golkonda. Later, Rama Raya left Golkonda to seek service under the Vijayanagar Ruler, who not only took him into his service but also promoted him to the highest rank. Rama Raya, made himself prominent, and married Tirumalamba, daughter of Krishna Deva Raya, the Ruler of Vijayanagar, and from that time onwards he was referred to as Aliya, which word in Kanarese meant son-in-law. Krishna Deva Raya died in 1529 and was succeeded by his half brother Achyuta Raya who in turn was succeeded by a minor son Venkata I. Salakama Timma, the treasurer of Achyuta Deva Raya, became the regent and putting the

lawful king to the sword became the emperor himself. Rama Raya now stepped in and taking the cause of Sadasiva Raya and supported by the Dowager queens of Krishnadeva Raya installed Sadasiva on the throne of Vijayanagar and himself became the Regent. It was as regent, he played his part in the history of Vijayanagar, though at a later time, he is said to have assumed all the royal insignia and still later he seems to have had himself installed on the throne with all the royal ceremonies. Sadasiva Raya was only emperor in name and he was virtually in prison all his life. He was allowed to be seen by the people once a year, when he gave darshan in full regal splendour to the assembled near the palace.

Rama Raya, an astute diplomat, fully recognised the truth of the Roman maxim "Divide et Impera" and followed it most successfully in all his dealings with his neighbouring Sultans. These were the Sultans of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, Berar and Bidar. It must be remembered that, on several occasions, the Sultans united with one another with the idea of

curbing the power of Vijayanagar under Rama Raya, but in all their undertakings they failed because of the Machiavellian policy pursued by Rama Raya.

At one time when Ahmednagar and Bijapur had allied themselves, Rama Raya to bring about a rift between the two successfully marched in three divisions against Ahmednagar and having captured the Sultan, Burhan Nizam Shah, compelled him to repudiate the alliance with Bijapur.

On another occasion, Rama Raya promising his aid induced Ahmednagar to join Golkonda and march against the Bijapuri fortress of Gulbarga, and subsequently concluding a peace with Bijapur, withdrew his support to the allies with the consequence the Sultan of Ahmednagar was woefully defeated by the Bijapur General, Asad Khan.

When Ibrahim, the younger brother of the Kutb Shah of Golkonda, sought his protection, Rama Raya not only gave an asylum to the fugitive prince but subsequently on the death of Kamrullah Qutb Shah aided Ibrahim to become the Sultan of Golkonda. Later than Ibrahim Khan



Shah of Ahmednagar met Ibrahim Kutb Shah in the neighbourhood of Kalyan and celebrated the marriage between Hussain Nizam Shah's daughter Bibi Jamalli with Ibrahim Kutb Shah and thereafter attacked Kalyan, Rama Raya, sought by Adil Shah of Bijapur, sent an army under his brother Venkatadri against Golkonda territory and successfully decoyed Ibrahim Kutb Shah from the fort of Kalyan and then forced Hussain Nizam Shah to come to terms. It was stipulated by Rama Raya, that the Nizam was to receive pan from his hands as a token of superiority of the donor. It is this humiliation of Nizam that was responsible for the dislike evinced by the Sultans for Rama Raya.

The arrogance of Rama Raya, was mainly responsible for the formation of the "League of the Faithful" which eventually destroyed the great southern Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and its capital city Bijanagar, now commonly referred to as the ruins of Hampi in the Bellary district.

The Muhammadan Sultans disliked Rama Raya, not only for his frequent

interference in the internal affairs of the Muhammadan States but also for the assistance displayed by Rama Raya against his Muhammadan allies in the campaigns against Ahmednagar.

The idea of an allied attack on Vijayanagar originated from the Sultan of Bijapur, who though very much beholden to his Vijayanagar ally, yet had a dislike to the person of Rama Raya and his arrogance. Primarily the idea to form an alliance was chiefly for curbing the insolence of Rama Raya for the disrespect shown by him to the Muhammadan Sultans and not as an expediency to check the power of Vijayanagar or to keep the balance of power between the Hindus and the Muhammadans. Prompted by Kishawar Khearty and Aboo Turab Shirazy, Adil Shah mooted the idea of a "League of the Faithful" with the Golkonda Sultan, who readily fell in with the idea and even agreed to bring about a reconciliation between Ali Adil Shah and Hussain Nizam Shah. The Golkonda Sultan sent Mustafa Khan to the court of Hussain Nizam Shah to attempt at bringing about a

reconciliation. Mustafa Khan reminded the Nizam "that during the time of the Bhamini princes, the whole strength of the Mussalman powers was united under one King which maintained the balance against the force of the Raya of Bisanagar; that now, though the Mussalman power was divided, yet the policy required that all the princes of the Faithful should unite in restraining the increasing power of their common enemy. He observed that the common authority of Raya of Bisanagar, who had reduced all the Rayas of Carnatic to his yoke, required to be checked; and that, if his influence should be removed from the countries of Islam, in order that the people of their several dominions, who should be considered as being committed by the Almighty to their care, might repose in safety from the oppressions of unbelievers, and their mosques and holy places, no longer be subject to the pollution from infidels". (Ferishta—III, p. 123-24). Nizam Shah then agreed to be reconciled to Ali Adil Shah and offered his daughter, Chand Bi Bi, in marriage

to Ali Adil Shah, and with her the fort of Sholapur as dowry. In return Ali Adil Shah agreed to give his sister, Fateh Bi Bi Hidya Sultana, to Nizam Shah's eldest son, Prince Shahazada Murtuza.

The marriages were celebrated with great pomp and the festivities marked the beginning of the League for the destruction of Rama Raya. The three Sultans formed the League and subsequently Ali Barid Shah seems to have joined the League, while the Sultan of Berar kept himself aloof.

In the meanwhile, "Ali Adil Shah, preparatory to the war and to afford himself a pretence for breaking with his ally, despatched an ambassador to Rama Raya, demanding restitution of some districts that had been wrested from him". As was expected, Rama Raya insulted the ambassador and expelled him from his court. This gave the Bijapur Sultan a handle and he immediately called upon the other Sultans to help him to crush the common enemy of the Islamic Faith.

All the Sultans with their armies, met in the plains of Bijapur and marching

southwards encamped at Talikota, where the armies rested for nearly ten days and spent the time in merriment and festivities, entertained by the Bijapur Sultan. "The Portuguese authors record that the allied army contained 50,000 horse and 3,000 foot". (Heras.) Some Mahratta detachments too joined the allied armies.

Rama Raya heard of the alliance and its objects and lost no time in making preparations to oppose the united forces. It is recorded that he had the City walls strengthened against any siege. According to Ferishta, the Hindu army consisted of 70,000 horse, 90,000 infantry, while the anonymous chronicler of Golkonda states the Hindu army to have consisted of 100,000 horse and 300,000 foot. The Vijayanagar army was composed of men from various provinces. Muhammadan chiefs too abounded in the Vijayanagar army. A portion of the Vijayanagar army was under the command of two Muhammadan captains, who later became 'famous' in history as having contributed to the downfall of Rama Raya and Hindu

Vijayanagar, by their treacherous action in the battle of Talikota.

The Muhammadan armies having passed the town of Talikota, which wrongly gave the name to the battle, laid waste the Vijayanagar territory to the north of the Krishna river. Rama Raya sent his brother, Tirumal Raya, called Yeltumrata by Ferishta, with 20,000 cavalry and 500 elephants and 10,000 foot to occupy and defend the right bank of the Krishna and the passages and to prevent the crossing of the river by the allied army. He next sent his brother, Venkatadri, with another contingent to reinforce Tirumala and his army.

Meanwhile, the Muhammadans sent scouts to locate the movements of the Hindu army. "The allies had perhaps halted too long. At any rate, their scouts returned to their sovereigns, with the news that all the passages were defended and that their only course was to force the ford immediately in their front. This was in possession of the Hindus who had fortified the bank on the south side and had thrown up earth works and had

stationed a number of cannons to dispute the crossing". (Sewell.)

"On obtaining this information, the allies held a council of war, when it was determined that they should march to another part of the river as if with the intention of crossing it; in hopes that the enemy might be induced to quit his position and follow, thus enabling the Muhammadans to return suddenly and throw part of the army across at the desired ford without interruption. Agreeably to this plan, the army of Islam marched on the next morning and continued to move for three days successively; which completely deceived the enemy, who quitted all his posts and manœuvred along the opposite side of the river. The allies on the third night suddenly struck their camp and moved with such rapidity, that during the next day they gained the ford, which the enemy had deserted, and crossed the river without any opposition". (Ferishta). The place and the ford where the Mussalmans crossed the river was Ingaldi on the left bank of the river Krishna. This crossing of the river, enabled the

allied army to move southwards to attack the main army of Vijayanagar under Rama Raya, which was then marching leisurely to give aid to Tirumala and Venkatadri, if necessary.

Heras in his book on the Aravidu Dynasty cites the following account of a description of Rama Raya's touching farewell to his queens before leaving the City. Rama Raya "then went to his own harem, spent sometime with Sathyabama Bai, the chief queen, and presented many rich jewels to her. Then he went to another of his wives, whose name was Deva Chintamani-Trivegal. Her company gave him great pleasure and he made presents to her. Then he came to the drawing room of his third wife, Mana Mohini Nijaswarupi. She tried to please him in many ways. . . . . Then he visited the chamber of his mother, Chandrasala. She waved many jewels round his head that evils may be warded off. He then explained to her the state of affairs, how four kings had made common cause in attacking him and how the temples, alms-distributing houses, and the existence of Brahmins were



threatened. He therefore intimated to her the plan of repulsing and punishing the enemy. He then fell at her feet and asked for her leave. She did not like the idea and said, "We have not hurt the Muhammadans, but even then they are all coming united. It would be better to negotiate with them". He, not approving of her advice, went away, whereupon she consented to please him. Afterwards he took rest during the night in his chambers". (Heras—footnotes—p. 201.) He left the City next day to reinforce his brothers, if necessary.

Rama Raya had expected his brothers to cope with the allied army without his aid and hence it was, that he moved out of the City, which he had strengthened some time back. So when he heard of the passage of the allied army "Rama Raya, though surprised, was not alarmed and took all possible means for defence". His brothers, though outwitted by the allied armies, hastened back and successfully effected a junction with Rama Raya and his enemy.

Rama Raya then "despatched to the vanguards a body of Rachbidas (of the

'Rachvedu Race) under a captain of their own to reconnoitre the surroundings. According to Mahratta accounts, there was a fierce exchange of arrows from both sides and both parties suffered heavily, but the Muhammadan vanguard was forced to retreat. Rama Raya was having dinner, when news suddenly came that the enemy was approaching and was almost within sight; and that between the vanguards of both armies an engagement had taken place. The Hindu chief, "though somewhat astonished at their (allies') activity", remarks Ferishta, "was by no means dismayed", but mounting a horse with juvenile agility, he put his troops in battle array. He entrusted his right wing to his brother, Tirumala, and his left wing to his younger brother, Venkatadri, while he himself commanded the centre. Two thousand elephants trained and armed, and one thousand pieces of ordnance were placed at different intervals of his lines."

"The allies likewise drew up their army in order of battle. Ali Adil Shah took over the command of the right wing

to oppose Venkatadri; the left was entrusted to Ibrahim Qutb Shah and Ali Barid Shah, in front of Tirumala's wing, while the centre was led by Hussain Nizam Shah. Each of these three divisions erected twelve standards in honour of the 12 Imams, before proceeding to the attack. Iklas Khan, an officer of Ahmednagar, was posted with a force of mounted Khorasani archers in advance of the centre. The gun carriages fastened together by strong chains and ropes were drawn up in front of the line of Hussain Nizam Shah; there were altogether six hundred pieces of ordnance of different calibre, placed in three lines of two hundred each. In the first line were the heavy guns, the smaller were in the second, while the third line consisted of swivels; the whole was commanded by Chalabi Rumi Khan, a distinguished officer of Asia Minor, who had served in Europe. The elephants were placed at intervals in the main line of the battle, their tusks being armed with sharp sword-blades". (Ferishta—III.)

"It was noon when the two armies advanced and joined battle. The left

wing of the Hindu army under the command of Venkatadri was the first to attack its opponent, the Sultan of Bijapur. Venkatadri had always been a helpmate to his brother Rama Raya on the battle-field, "verily as Lakshmana was to the Epic Hero, Rama" as the grant of Venkata III says. This great general was the first to attack the Mussalman force. "The infidels", Ferishta remarks, "begin the attack, with vast flight of rockets and rapid discharges of artillery. "Venkatadri had under his command two hundred thousand infantry, twenty-five thousand cavalry and five hundred elephants, and with this force, he fought valiantly inflicting great loss on his enemies". (The Aravidu dynasty by Heras)—p. 205-06.

Tirumala was on the right wing opposing the combined armies of Golkonda and Bidar. Tirumala with his son's help successfully beat back Ibrahim Shab, but was seriously injured in the conflict and was forced to retire from the field. When this news of injury to Tirumala reached the ears of Rama Raya, he calling his Rachavedu followers, fell upon the Muslims.

and broke their order. Routing both the right and left wings of the allied army, Rama Raya attacked the Muslim Centre commanded by the Sultan of Ahmednagar. The attack was so unexpected that the Sultan had to retreat nearly half a league sustaining a loss of nearly 2,000 men. The fight was not over, Rama Raya was again charged by Adil Shah's troops and the Sultan of Ahmednagar, rallying his forces, reinforced the Bijapur attack. Great was the havoc caused by the Nizam Shah's artillery under Iklas Khan and Rumi Khan on the Hindu army.

"At this phase of the fight Hussain Nizam Shah ordered the camp followers to set up his pavilion in the front of the enemy. The pavilion was the King's great tent of State, and it was the custom of the Sultans of the Deccan whenever they ordered this pavilion to be set up in the field of battle, to stand their ground without quitting their saddle, until the victory was declared for them." (Burhani Masir.) Rama Raya had a throne similarly set up and seating himself thereon, caused presents to be distributed

among his army followers. This act of generosity on the part of Rama Raya inspired the Hindu army to make a sudden attack on the Muslim right and left wing and rout them. Ferishta remarks that the allies were thrown into temporary disorder and Ibrahim Kutb Shah and Adil Shah were despairing of success. The author of *Burhani Masir* writes, "the defeat of the Muslims appeared inevitable", and is corroborated by Fariay Sousa, who writes that "Rama Raya almost defeated his enemies". "The Muslims slain were piled in heaps over heaps and autumn seemed to have come over the Muslim army. The infidels showed their superiority and valour". (*Basatin-us-Salatin* cited in the *Aravidu Dynasty*.)

The Centre of the Muslim army under Sultan Nizam Shah, however, stood its ground and caused havoc to the Hindu army by its deadly artillery attack. This effective artillery attack caused great confusion in the Hindu army. Kishar Lary Khan, a Bijapuri officer holding command in the Muslim Centre, seizing the opportunity attacked and drove the Hindu Centre backwards.

“And then at the height of all confusion there was a movement in the Hindu army that decided the fate of the day. The Muhammadan generals who served under Rama Raya taking advantage of the confusion caused by the last charge of Kishawar Khan Lary, turned their backs on their lord and went over with their troops to the cause of Islam. Their treason recorded neither by Ferishta nor by Ali-ibn-Aziz, explains quite satisfactorily the sudden change of fortune at the end of the battle. We are made aware of it by C. Fredrick, who heard of the account of the whole action, one year later, when he passed through Vijayanagar”. (Heras.)

“These four Kings” says he, “were not able to overcome this City and the King of Bezeneger, but by treason. This King of Bezeneger was a gentile and had amongst all others of his captains, two of which were notable and they were Moores (Muhammadans) and these two captains had either of them in charge three score and ten or four score thousand men. These captains being of one religion with the four kings, which were Moores

(Muhammadans) wrought means with them to destroy and betray their own king into their hands. The King of Bezeneger esteemed not the force of the four kings, his enemies, but went out of his City to wage battle with them in the fields; and when the armies were joined, the battle lasted but a while, not the space of four hours; because the two traitorous captains in the chiefest of the fights, with their company turned their faces against their king and made disorder in his armies, that as astonished, they set themselves to flight". (Purchas X p. 92-3). Anquetil Du Perron likewise records "the king abandoned during the battle by two Muhammadan chiefs perished". (Heras—p. 212.) Heras suggests that one of the Muhammadan chiefs who had deserted might be Amin-ul-Mulk, whom Rama Raya used to call 'his brother' as per the account of the anonymous chronicler quoted by Ferishta. The Hindu army dismayed at the sudden desertion of the Muhammadan captains took to flight and Rama Raya being injured caused himself to be taken in a litter



to his tent. But before he was taken to the tent he was taken prisoner and conducted before Hussain Nizam Shah. Cauto says that Hussain Nizam Shah beheaded Rama Raya with his own hands. Thus was victory gained by the Muhammadans. Thus ended the great Hindu leader.

"This was not a defeat merely but a cataclysm", writes Sewell. "The battle of Rakshas-Tagdi is the milestone that separates the era of the Hindu splendour in the south of India from the age of Muhammadan expansion. Impartial history acknowledges its influence centuries after, since it paved the way for the Maratha cavalry of Sivaji and his successors, fostered the ambitious ideal of Aurungzeb and his nabobs and attracted the ambitions of Haider Ali to overthrow the ancient Hindu Dynasty of Mysore. The glorious empire of Vijayanagar, faithful trustee of the Hoysalas for two centuries and a half, was now seriously menaced by its secular opponents, the Muslim powers of Central India".

"Vijayanagara never wholly recovered from that tremendous blow; the-

foundations of this marvellous empire which was the wonder of both the merchants and travellers, were deeply shaken and its star never rose again to the zenith of its sky". (Heras—p. 217-19.)

It must however be remembered that the Hindu prowess that succeeded in almost annihilating the Muhammadan right and left wing is unquestionable. According to the writer of *Burhani-Masir*, "the defeat of the Mussalmans appeared inevitable." Fariya Sousa quoted by Heras says, Rama Raya almost defeated his enemies". Cesare Fredrick says, "The King of Bezeneger esteemed not the force of the four kings, his enemies, but went out of the City to wage battle with them in the field; and when the armies were joined the battle lasted but a while, not the space of four hours, because, the two traitorous captains in the chiefest of the fights turned their faces against their king". (Purchas—x—p. 98.) It was only after the desertion of the two treacherous Muhammadan captains that Rama Raya attempted "to make an escape on foot" most likely to gain shelter and review

the situation. As ill-luck would have it, even before he had time to take stock of the changed situation of his army consequent upon the Muhammadan desertion, he was captured and taken before "Hussain Nizam Shah, who beheaded the venerable prisoner with his own hands".

Secondly, it has been presumed by many writers that the battle of Talikota resulted in the break up of the empire into petty principalities with no one central authority controlling them. This is not borne out by facts. Epigraphical records clearly show that the empire was left intact and without any break up whatsoever in its power. The fact that Tirumala immediately after the departure of the Sultans from Vijayanagar turned up to repopulate the city, clearly shows that all was not lost and that there was real unity in the country and the power of the emperor still supreme. The anonymous author of the life of St. Xavier quoted by Heras says, "Nevertheless the king of this country was not so much knocked down for he is still very rich and powerful; and he possesses a large State, quite a good number of elephants and great cavalry and infantry."

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